

**“Vojnik i Narod”**

**The Soldier and the People**

**Civil-Military Relations in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and**

**Civil-Military Relations in Slovenia**

**by**

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May 1998

## **Abstract**

### **“Vojnik i Narod”**

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Joseph Leo Derdzinski, MA

The University of Texas at Austin, 1998

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The Jugoslovenska Narodna Armija (JNA) - the Yugoslav National Army, played a pivotal role in the breakup of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). This thesis, then, is about the Yugoslav military and civil-military relations in the SFRY and the consequences those relations had for Yugoslavia. It chronicles the historical development of the JNA from World War II to the outbreak of hostilities in 1991. The Yugoslav military, as an inherently conservative organization, by seeking to keep SFRY together actually hastened its demise. But this thesis is also about the future of civil-military relations for the former Yugoslav republics. Slovenia, seven years after independence, provides a relevant model of study. I argue that Slovenia is an example of a healthy civil-military relationship. Other South Slav states must consider Slovenia's example when analyzing and adopting their own political structures.

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## INTRODUCTION

The state known as the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, a state which had existed since 1945, met a bloody end in 1991. While other states in the region were going through transitions from their respective communist governments, Yugoslavia had its own transition. No movement toward a new form of governance in Eastern Europe was more violent than in Yugoslavia. My thesis is about the role of the Yugoslav military in that transition and in Yugoslavia's demise. My thesis is also about the future of civil-military relations in the former republics of Yugoslavia, in particular Slovenia.

I have both a professional and a personal interest in the writing of this paper. The professional aspect is that as an active-duty military officer whose duties brought me to study the Balkans, I find the study of civil-military relations in Yugoslavia important and expedient when learning about the political and social dynamics of the state. From a personal standpoint, I am amazed by the war in Yugoslavia. Almost ten years in the military never brought me into contact with any sort of warfare, much less the internecine conflict which ravaged the land of the South Slavs. During the six months I spent as part of NATO's Implementation Force - IFOR - I traveled throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina, speaking with locals everywhere. I saw destruction wherever I went. I wondered during my entire stay: how could this happen to people who had lived together in relative harmony for decades?

I believe the main culprit in Yugoslavia's dissolution were deranged masters and their use of nationalism. But I knew there were institutional players that supported these individuals. One of those institutions was the Yugoslav military. The first half of this thesis, therefore, will delve into the role of the military in the latest Yugoslav conflict. The military, as an inherently conservative organ of the state, aided in Yugoslavia's demise because in its efforts to hold the state together, it actually accelerated its destruction. The second half of this paper catalogues Slovenia's history of conflict with the *Jugoslovenska Narodna Armija* (JNA) – Yugoslav People's Army - followed by an analysis of Slovenia's civil-military relationship since independence.

My paper is both descriptive and prescriptive. It is self-serving in that I write this to help me understand how the Yugoslav and then the Slovene military were formed and organized and how they interacted with the greater society, especially during conflict (the descriptive). I will show how the military's failure to remain outside of politics sped Yugoslavia's end, and that, in contrast, Slovenia has adopted a model of civil-military relations appropriate for the Balkans (the prescriptive).

The first half of this thesis begins with a discussion of civil-military relations in general, then looks at the history of Yugoslavia to 1991, demonstrating a pattern of military complicity with the communist state

throughout the entire period. The military forces and their structure will be laid out in a separate section, followed by a discussion of the final events leading up to the end of the Yugoslav state, when the military played a leading role in its dissolution. The second half concentrates on Slovenia. It reviews Slovenia's battle for independence and the JNA's role in Slovene affairs, followed by a discussion of civil-military relations in post-Communist states in general. After of a brief introduction to independent Slovenia's geography and culture, civil-military relations in Slovenia are then thoroughly analyzed. I argue that Slovenia's civil-military relationship is one model that the rest of the former republics of Yugoslavia could adopt.

## **CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN THE SOCIALIST FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA**

### **Civil-Military Relations in Communist Regimes**

Civil-military relations in democracies differ greatly from those in communist countries. In a democratic society, the soldier is deemed to be a function of the state apparatus, a tool which the statesman uses when necessary. The civilian political leadership consults the military leadership, and may even relinquish operational control during time of conflict. But the military is always under the control of the civilian government. In other forms of governance, most notably in the one-party political system of communist countries, the military also is a tool of the state, but it plays a more active role in the affairs of the state, with military members often holding positions of power within the government. In the communist systems of Eastern Europe in general, and in Yugoslavia in particular, the Communist Party dominated all aspects of politics. The main difference, then, between civil-military relations in democratic systems and in Communist systems is that soldiers are part of the governing body in the latter and in so doing, has a much larger role in maintaining the political order. Zoltan Barany argues that socialist systems have been found to be more militaristic than democratic ones, partly because of the domination of Marxist-Leninist ideology. All communist states maintained large armies, "independent of their level of economic development or military threat levels."<sup>1</sup> And the history of Yugoslavia

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<sup>1</sup>Zoltan Barany op cit, Soldiers and Politics in Eastern Europe, 1945-90 (New York, NY: St Martin's Press, 1993), 8.

demonstrates that, at the beginning at least, the party was the military, and the military the party. Barany further posits that the relationship in communist countries was reciprocal: the party needed the military to ensure its position with the society; the military needed the party for its material well being and social prestige.<sup>2</sup> In other words, in a functioning polity which is representative of the desires of the populace, the military is necessarily subordinated to the civilian leadership. But in those states which do not require the support of the people, the government must rely on, and thereby co-opt, the military as a base of its stability. In Yugoslavia, this was certainly the case. And because this type of civil-military relationship existed, in the latter years of Yugoslavia the military helped bring an end to the state.

## **Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav National Army**

### **THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE YUGOSLAV NATIONAL ARMY**

The JNA traces its roots to the beginning of the communist presence in Yugoslavia. Due to its geographic position on the periphery of the European continent, Yugoslavia traditionally has been a strategic link between East and West. In World War II this was no exception. Adolph Hitler looked upon Yugoslavia as a means to an end; he only wanted stability in the region so he could transit through en route to Greece and other areas of the Balkans. In 1941, the thirty divisions of the Army of Yugoslavia (the first, "royal" Yugoslav state) were not able to defend against, much less defeat, the fifty-two divisions of

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<sup>2</sup>Barany, 9.

Germans, Italians, and Hungarians. The Bulgarians simultaneously invaded Macedonia, forcing the first Yugoslav state to collapse and its leaders to flee into exile. The Nazis set up puppet regimes - the quislings - in Serbia and Croatia.

But not all the inhabitants peacefully subjugated themselves to their invaders; nascent resistance movements formed. One of these movements was the Serbian *Četnici*, or Chetniks, under Draža Mihailović.<sup>3</sup> This mainly Serb force was concentrated in Serbia and spent a large portion of its energies in internal conflict with the *Ustashe*, the Croat fascists. The Chetniks could do little to attract other nationalities to their cause because of their openly pro-Serb agenda. The other main opposition group was the Yugoslav Communists. The Communists were under the direction of Josip Broz Tito, the Croat-born Communist who had recently returned from exile in the Soviet Union, fresh with training and indoctrination in the Soviet socialist system. The Yugoslav Communists were initially a small, hard-core group who refused to accept surrender, but who remained inactive by the order of the Communist International, or Comintern, until the German attack on the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941. The members of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, via the Comintern, then received orders to resist the German occupation by any means. They began their campaign by launching small-scale attacks and sabotage against the occupying forces. The military wing of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia

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<sup>3</sup> The name Mihailović still invokes passion among South Slavs. Many branded in post-war Yugoslavia Mihailović a traitor for his supposed lack of will in fighting the Axis, while others look upon him as a pragmatist who did his best in the impossible conditions of the day.

formally became the National Liberation Army of Yugoslavia (NLA) on December 21, 1941 (Stalin's birthday, incidentally). The NLA grew quickly. It soon had 80,000 troops with which the NLA began its fight against the occupiers, collaborators and the Chetniks. By the end of 1942, these partisans had grown to over 150,000 troops, organized into two corps, three divisions, thirty-one brigades and thirty-eight detachments. Each successive attack by the partisans brought more losses to the enemy Axis forces.<sup>4</sup> Tito followed the tactic of People's War. He and his partisans "swam through the people like fish in the sea," helping any citizen who fought against the Nazis.<sup>5</sup> The NLA was successful in drawing in all nationalities. Because communism purported to be based on class struggle, not a struggle of nations, it appealed to many South Slavs who rejected the chauvinistic movements in Croatia and Serbia.

The NLA was also the largest and most organized resistance movement in Yugoslavia; therefore it attracted the attention of the Allies. Great Britain supported the army logistically. Milutin Propadović argues that British support of Tito and his partisans was the lesser of two evils; Mihailović and his Chetniks could not be counted on to effectively fight against the Germans.<sup>6</sup> The NLA was so well equipped and well organized that it forced the Germans to devote more troops in Yugoslavia than they had planned to, siphoning much-needed divisions

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<sup>4</sup>Glenn E. Curtis, ed., Yugoslavia: A Country Study (Federal Research Division, 1990), 230.

<sup>5</sup>D. A. Dyker and I. Vejvoda, eds., Yugoslavia and After (New York: Longman, 1996), 119.

<sup>6</sup> Milutin Propadović, D.V. Ljotić, Zbor I Komunistička Partija Jugoslavije [D.V. Ljotić, Parliament and the Communist Party of Yugoslavia] (Birmingham, England: Iskra, 190), 318.



from its eastern front with the Soviet Union. The Yugoslav Communists were the key to keeping the resistance against the Germans active.

### **THE JNA IN THE POST-WAR YEARS**

By the end of the war, the NLA and the Communist Party of Yugoslavia controlled most of Yugoslavia. Not only had the communists defeated the occupying Axis forces by themselves (the only East European country to do so<sup>7</sup>), they also successfully rid the country of all opposition groups in Yugoslavia's concurrent civil war. The Yugoslavia political system established at the end of World War II was based on the Marxist ideology of the Communist Party. Most important to note is the fact that the military was formed from the Party, and the Party was organized from the military establishment. In fact, by 1945 the 800,000-strong force, according to Robin Remington, "served as both the womb and the midwife of the second Yugoslav state."<sup>8</sup> Using the Soviet model of governance, the new Yugoslavia claimed to be based on democratic ideals, with a socialist system based on the concept of "brotherhood and unity" wherein all nationalities would be equal. But this system did not live up to its promises.<sup>9</sup> In fact, the political system was authoritative, with Tito as its head. In the post-war period, the military did not lose its function; on the contrary, in a move analogous

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<sup>7</sup> Albania also was able to liberate itself from the Axis forces. It is important to mention that the Germans were in retreat from the Balkans to shore up the defense of the home front.

<sup>8</sup>Melissa K. Bokovy, Jill A. Irvine and Carol S. Lilly, eds., State-Society Relations in Yugoslavia, 1945-1992 (New York: Saint Martin's Press, 1997), 63.

<sup>9</sup>Anton Grizold, "Civil-Military Relations in Slovenia" in Anton A. Bebler, ed., Civil-Military Relation in Post-Communist States (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997), 101.

to all socialist states at some time in their histories, the regime found it necessary to assign the military a role as its protector.

In the National Liberation Army political indoctrination was paramount; political commissars were set up within the relevant units to ensure appropriate levels of political counsel. Each unit had its own political commissar, but not merely as a counselor. Among their tasks were explaining the Party line, organizing meetings and conducting courses on political matters.<sup>10</sup> This was no small task. By 1948, the JNA was the third largest land force on the European continent.<sup>11</sup> Tito's party won the "right" from the Allies and the Soviet Union, as well from local legitimacy, to lead Yugoslavia. The Communists emerged as the military power that liberated the South Slavs from the Fascists. The prevailing thought was that the Party vis-à-vis the military formed the second Yugoslavia by banding together to effectively control Yugoslav territory.

According to James Gow, the development of the JNA falls into three stages: the first as a conventional standing army; the second, in a return to the partisan roots, becoming again a territorial militia; in the third and last phase it became a component of a "duplex" defense system with an operational army and a territorial defense force. The three *official* periods for these transitions, based

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<sup>10</sup>James Gow, Legitimacy and the Military: the Yugoslavia Crisis (London: Pinter Publishers Ltd., 1992), 38.

<sup>11</sup>Anton Bebler, "The Military and the Yugoslavia Crisis." Suedost Europa, (1991): 128.

on the adoption of new military doctrines are 1945-48, 1948-68, and 1969 onwards, respectively.<sup>12</sup>

At the end of the Second World War, Yugoslavia was in a seemingly envious position. It was the strongest Balkan state and in many respects the leading state in Eastern Europe outside of the Soviet Union. With its 800,000-strong military, the communist leadership sought to consolidate its gains and solidify its position with a series of economic, social and political changes, as well as concrete foreign policy goals. But the international environment was not as amenable to Yugoslavia's goals as it might have liked. In the north, Tito lacked Great Power backing because Churchill did not gain the 50 percent ability to control Yugoslavia he wanted.<sup>13</sup> Because Great Britain was Yugoslavia's main supporter in the war, it expected to be compensated by being allowed to exert political control over Yugoslav affairs. But Britain's wishes were not fulfilled when Yugoslavia firmly endorsed socialism and the East European states which practiced it. Tito sought to advance Yugoslav control in the Balkans. Without achieving all of their expansionist goals in the north, the Yugoslavs did receive a piece of territory they sought in the north of their country, an area just south of much sought-after Trieste which included 2,995 square miles and over 600,000

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<sup>12</sup>Gow, 40.

<sup>13</sup> This refers to an agreement made between Stalin and Churchill while World War II was still being fought. The two leaders discussed each Balkan nation and decided on appropriate percentages of "control" by each power. For instance, the UK would control 90 percent of Greece, the Soviet Union 10 percent. The UK would have 50 percent control in Yugoslavia. This seemingly absurd agreement indicated the mistrust Churchill had of Stalin and Churchill's efforts to maintain a Western presence in the region.

inhabitants. Yugoslavia's actions were not as constrained in the south as they were in the north. Using its military might, the Kosovo region was occupied and reattached to Serbia. The area was joined to Serbia, but recognized as an autonomous province with Albanian as the primary language. In Albania, the Yugoslavs assumed the prewar role filled by the Italians. Using their strong influence, the Yugoslavs were able to exert political control over the Albanian Communist Party, and Yugoslav experts went into Albania to explore steps to exploit Albanian resources. Stalin did not approve of the idea of Yugoslav-led Balkan federation that threatened Soviet hegemony in the region.<sup>14</sup>

The military was given the goals of defending Yugoslavia's borders, sovereignty and territorial integrity. It was also responsible for the protection of the constitutionally "legitimate" socialist political system.<sup>15</sup> In line with this, in the course of the postwar Yugoslav period the military as a function of the regime progressed along a definable course. The periods of transition, however, all have a common thread: the increasing authority of the military.

In the post-war years, 1945-46, the Yugoslav military closely paralleled the Red Army. The Communist Party of Yugoslavia, adhering to the Soviet model, had full control over and insured complete indoctrination of the armed forces, especially its professional element, into the communist political order.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Barbara Jelavich, History of the Balkans, Vol II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 314-15.

<sup>15</sup>Bebler, ed., 1997, 102.

<sup>16</sup>Anton Bebler, "Political Pluralism and the Yugoslavian Professional Military" in Jim Seroka

The main problem of the JNA at the end of the war was a lack of trained officers; therefore, thousands of JNA officer candidates and soldiers were sent to military schools in the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union also gave Yugoslavia thousands of rifles, machine guns, tanks, airplanes, artillery pieces and mortars.<sup>17</sup> According to Anton Bebler, Tito widely used the military and its system of military courts, prosecutors and jails to suppress and persecute all forms of opposition within the military and in the general populace as well. During 1945-53, all throughout Yugoslavia thousands of military trials were staged in an effort to squash political opposition inside and outside the party.<sup>18</sup> During this period, Tito expelled 200,000 Communists, 30,000 of whom were sent to prison and several thousand killed.<sup>19</sup> Modeling the JNA after the Soviet army was not accidental. It merely reflected Tito's consolidation of power, using the repressive techniques of the Stalinist model.

The JNA in this period also defended Yugoslavia against the Imperialist powers of the Western nations. In fact, relations between the United States and Yugoslavia hit a low in August 1946 with the downing of two US military airplanes over Yugoslavia. In this period, a direct conflict between the United States and Yugoslavia became a real possibility, and the US viewed Yugoslavia as the biggest threat in the Balkans. The military of both countries had

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and Vukasin Pavlović, eds., The Tragedy of Yugoslavia: The Failure of Democratic Transformation (London: M.E. Sharpe, 1992), 107.

<sup>17</sup>Dyker and Vejvoda, eds., 120.

<sup>18</sup>Dyker and Vejvoda, eds., 107.

<sup>19</sup>Milovan Rezun. Europe and War in the Balkans: Towards a New Yugoslav Identity (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1995), 101.

contingency plans drawn up which pitted one against the other. For the US this was part of a larger plan to defeat of the Soviet Union and its allies; for the Yugoslavs, this meant slowing any advancing Western attack. Despite these strained relations, Yugoslavia slowly demobilized its armed forces to around 400,000 soldiers, about one-half of its wartime level. The Soviet Union, hoping to subjugate the Yugoslavs like the other East European nations, pushed for further demobilization and a dependence on the Red Army for defense. The Yugoslavs were becoming increasingly displeased with the amount and quality of the materiel and training offered to them by the Soviets, as well as the political pressure heaped upon them by their Soviet partners. But the political environment changed with the well-known Yugoslav-Soviet split in 1948, when Tito broke with the Soviet Union, and the Soviet Union withdrew its military advisers and support.<sup>20</sup>

Yugoslav military leaders felt that they had been “taught to suck eggs” by their Soviet military advisers.<sup>21</sup> The victorious partisans had freed their country from the Fascists without significant Soviet help. Why should they now be forced to accept Soviet hegemony? The Yugoslavs thought in terms of a military alliance with the Soviet Union. The Soviets looked towards total subjugation. The 1948 expulsion from the Information Bureau of the Communist Parties, the Cominform, brought Yugoslavia into a new strategic position. The army’s attention was forced to divert itself from its southern and northern flanks, instead

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<sup>20</sup>Curtis, ed., 232.

<sup>21</sup>Gow, 42.

focusing on protection of its northern and eastern borders and the possibility of attack by the Soviet Union.<sup>22</sup> The military was the key as it was the basis for state cohesion, a sentiment which lasted through the 1950s, especially after the break with the Soviet Union in 1948. After the split, the populace perceived the military as an independent Yugoslavia's main line of defense from both "imperialist" enemies and the newly hostile Eastern Bloc. But the problem, according to Remington, of using an external threat, be it the Germans or the Soviets, as a function of state cohesion is that it only "papers over" the problems from within. She points out that partisans had joined together to fight against outside enemies, not for each other.<sup>23</sup> The challenge of building a "South Slav" state loomed huge. The soldiers of the NLA turned JNA had the common bond of fighting the enemy, but the rest of the populace did not have such a bond. In the meantime, the Yugoslavs could take advantage of the break with the USSR by gaining concessions from the West.

The main observation of World War II and the immediate post-war period is that the NLA survived as an entity; in fact, the Party survived because of the victories of the military. The NLA was able to win and then secure the Party's preeminence within Yugoslav. The precedent for military-political symbiosis had begun. Founding the military on the Red Army model offered the communist leadership in Yugoslav certain advantages. The use of the Soviet form, according

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<sup>22</sup>Gow, 43.

<sup>23</sup>Bokovy et al, eds., 63. Remington is referring to, of course, the internal conflicts in World War II among the various indigenous warring parties (*Ustashe*, *Četnici*, and the partisans).

to Gow, and the strong cooperation between the two countries offered two benefits for the Yugoslav Communists. First, the close ties between them gave the Yugoslav leaders the necessary Marxist-Leninist credentials; the second was that the Yugoslavs gained from Soviet experience.<sup>24</sup> But the partisan tradition would not be diminished by the imposition of the Soviet model. With the advent of these new relations with the Soviet Union the political scene changed dramatically for Yugoslavia, and its army was forced to adopt a new role consummate with this new environment.

#### **THE JNA IN THE ERA OF NONALIGNMENT**

The break between Tito and Stalin has been analyzed in numerous accounts, but the lesson for this study is that the government and the military no longer had to orient themselves only against the imperialist forces of the West, but also against the Soviet forces to the east as well. In effect, Stalin wanted to insure that he remained in control over all communist countries of Eastern Europe, and the years directly following the end of the Second World War saw his efforts culminate in the transition of all states of the region to Soviet satellites by 1947. All states, that is, except Yugoslavia. Incidentally, US and British war-planners doubted the authenticity of the split for some time, and included Yugoslavia among the allies of the Soviet Union until June 1949.<sup>25</sup> By 1953, however, the

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<sup>24</sup>Gow, 42.

<sup>25</sup>Anton Bebler, "The US Strategy and Yugoslavia's Security." (From Internet Sources.)



Western strategic plans called Yugoslavia one of the top three threatened countries from an attack by the Soviet Union.<sup>26</sup>

A “special” relationship formed between the Yugoslavs and the West, mainly with the United States. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Yugoslavia received over \$2 billion in aid (about \$15 billion in today’s dollars). The JNA, with its 300,000-400,000 soldiers, was considered paramount for Western success in a second all-out European war. In an effort to please Western nations, the JNA tacitly agreed with the members of the newly-formed NATO alliance to protect parts of Italy and Austria from invading Soviet troops.<sup>27</sup> But the Yugoslav-Soviet rift would not last forever, and Stalin’s death in 1953 hastened the end of the special relationship with the West.

By 1954 it was clear that any immediate threat to Yugoslavia from the Soviet Union was rapidly fading. The height of rapprochement with Yugoslavia was in May 1955 when the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev visited Belgrade. He in effect outwardly supported the Yugoslav variant of socialism; the relationship between the two socialist nations was based on equality of all socialist states, on peaceful coexistence and non-interference in the other’s internal affairs. But Yugoslavia still did not join the Soviet-led bloc, military or economic.<sup>28</sup> Yugoslavia’s policy of non-alignment allowed it to receive concessions from East

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<sup>26</sup>Bebler, “The US Strategy...”

<sup>27</sup>Bebler, “The US Strategy...”

<sup>28</sup>Jelavich, 390.

and West. Miloš Vasić points out that Tito was able to successfully maintain a balance in receipt of military aid and technology transfers, while at the same time creating an indigenous arms production capability.<sup>29</sup>

But the relationship with the West never sat well with the regime's internal politics and Communist ideology. In fact, the receipt of aid from the "Imperialist West" was objected to by many ranking military officers. In the 1950s they were quietly dismissed and retired because of their opposition.<sup>30</sup> But as Yugoslavia evolved politically, to appease the old guard communists. A Yugoslav-led movement of cooperation among other small, independent nations surfaced. Tito worked with leaders from around the world to form a coalition of Third World nations which would use its superiority in terms of total population and number of states (over 50) to further their common interests. Tito used this "non-aligned" movement to advance his alternative, i.e. not subject to Moscow, socialist model to the world. The newly liberated colonies of Africa and Asia seized the movement in a sentiment of both anti-Imperialism and anti-West, while simultaneously rejecting the USSR's influence. Tito, however, did not desire to totally sever his links with other communists. The creation of the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO) in 1955 (of which Yugoslavia opted not to join) as a response to NATO, and the subsequent Warsaw Pact invasion of Hungary in November 1956, changed Tito's attitude toward the East. The Yugoslavs prepared against a possible threat from the Warsaw Pact; in fact it viewed the

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<sup>29</sup>Dyker and Vejvoda, eds., 120.

<sup>30</sup>Bebler, "The US Strategy..."

Soviet Union as its greatest threat in an all-out European war. Yugoslavia again was in a precarious strategic position vis-à-vis other Warsaw Pact members and the Balkan members of NATO (Greece and Turkey). Its strategic location put it directly in the middle of an East-West conflict.

The Yugoslav military found it necessary to change its military doctrine, again recognizing Yugoslavia's special position, namely, that of a relatively poor country surrounded by the world's two largest military alliances, neither of which was friendly towards Yugoslavia's political doctrines. The policy of All People's Defense was forwarded as the most logical solution. By 1959, the JNA formed 126 Partisan detachments on a territorial, militia basis.<sup>31</sup> The partisans had always been regarded as necessary for Yugoslavia's defense. Now for the first time they were part of official military doctrine. According to Gow, the JNA of this period was organized into strategic echelons. In the first echelon were units maintained to sustain a full frontal war, to offer resistance against an invading force. The next defense level was on a peacetime footing, to be used as reserves in case of war. The last layer was made of the partisan detachments in the rear which could be used for guerrilla war against an occupying army. This system was not fully implemented until 1965.<sup>32</sup>

In the 1960s, the leadership and subsequent official attitudes of the Soviet Union changed. Leonid Brezhnev ousted Khrushchev; the prevailing mood of

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<sup>31</sup>Gow, 45.

<sup>32</sup>Gow, 45.

“The Thaw” was severely curtailed, and foreign policy in the Soviet sphere of influence tightened to insure compliance of the satellites. There was another thaw in relations under Brezhnev and then with the invasion of Czechoslovakia by WTO troops in 1968 and the subsequent Brezhnev Doctrine, the Yugoslavs again envisaged a serious threat from the East. The new environment dictated a radical change from previous doctrines and organization. This change would encompass all Yugoslav society under with the organization of *Opštenarodna Odbrana Jugoslavije*, or General People’s Defense. The spirit of the partisan, it was hoped, would live on as a vehicle for the cohesion of the multi-ethnic state.

#### **GENERAL PEOPLE’S DEFENSE**

For Yugoslav society as a whole, the invasion of Czechoslovakia had a profound effect. Barbara Jelavich asserts that popularity for the government increased tremendously directly afterward. In fact, in 1968, over 100,000 new members, mostly under the age of twenty-five, joined the Party.<sup>33</sup> But the invasion also exposed the weakness of the defense system as a potential Soviet invasion became a real possibility. In 1969, General People’s Defense (GPD)<sup>34</sup> was proposed, radically altering the Yugoslav military structure.

Ideas proposed by Yugoslav officials included the concept that the starting point for GPD was that the Yugoslavs would not be aggressors but rather keepers

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<sup>33</sup>Jelavich, 395.

<sup>34</sup> Also known as Total National Defense.

of the peace. The entire populace would be involved in the nation's defense, not just the standing army. According to Colonel General Nikola Ljubičić, the goal of GPD was,

to prepare all society thoroughly for long-lasting resistance, to equip the armed forces in the entirety...to train not only the armed forces but the entire nation for offering resistance, *as it has been demonstrated that the readiness to resist determinedly is the most important obstacle to anyone's plans of conquest.*<sup>35</sup>

General People's Defense, therefore, prepared the entire nation to fight against an aggressor, and to eventually defend the nation if needed. The nation's defenses would be split into two separate entities: the JNA, encompassing all active land, sea and coastal defense forces, and the Territorial Defense Forces (TDF) to mobilize and organize the populace for the purpose of an all-out defense of the nation. Every man from the age of eighteen to sixty-five and every woman from nineteen to forty needed to prepare to defend their land. The TDF had about one million persons, from small units to defend factories to larger, well-equipped mobile units that could move throughout the country. The TDF would supplement and be subordinated to the JNA to provide it the necessary military strength and depth it would need in the most-likely scenario of an attack by forces in the WTO. About nine percent of the Yugoslav population, around 2 million people, was somehow involved in the defense of Yugoslavia.<sup>36</sup> In the event of a

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<sup>35</sup>Olga Mladenović, ed., Opštenarodna Odbrana Jugoslavije [The Concept of General People's Defense] (Belgrade: Medjunarodna Politika, 1970), 36.

<sup>36</sup>A. Ross Johnson, "The Role of the Military in Yugoslavia: An Historical Sketch" in Roman Kolkowicz and Andrej Korbonski, eds., Soldiers, Peasants and Bureaucrats (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1982), 185.

war between NATO and the WTO, the Yugoslav forces would resist the presence of any nation on its soil. Regardless of ideology, an occupying force would be considered an enemy of Yugoslavia and Yugoslavia would immediately join the opposing side with the specific goal of liberating its territory.<sup>37</sup> The mobilization would be against any aggressor, East or West. The entire state, via the doctrine of GPD, would be the defense of Yugoslavia. The leadership planned that the ideology would serve as a cohesive element in the already fractious state, but the structure actually decreased state cohesion because of the development of territorial defense.

The National Defense Law of 1969, which established the Territorial Defense Forces, laid out its specific chains of command. The JNA remained under the control of the central government in Belgrade, but socio-political communities, such as republics and autonomous provinces, would organize the TDF.<sup>38</sup> These territorial forces were mainly a civilian affair, perhaps analogous to the National Guard units in the United States. But with a difference: Article 1 states that "Every citizen who in war, in an organized way, participates with arms in the struggle against the enemy can be a member of the armed forces of Yugoslavia."<sup>39</sup> Whereas the JNA would be the professional military with the heaviest weapons and the most aggressive training, the TDF would provide the necessary forces to sustain a battle. After the battle, the TDF would conduct

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<sup>37</sup>Curtis, ed., 235.

<sup>38</sup>Gow, 46.

<sup>39</sup>Gow op cit, 46.

guerrilla warfare against the enemy. Among the precepts of this total defense was the ready availability of and distribution of weapons. Armories and caches of weapons were established throughout the country, especially in factories and other workplaces. For the first time some military forces, albeit the ones least well equipped and trained, now came under the control of the republics, not the central government. And almost as weighty for future events within Yugoslavia was the arming of citizens and dispersal of weapons throughout the land.

According to Remington, the return to such a dual military strategy was based on several assumptions. GDP assumed that all Yugoslavs would agree on what they were fighting for, not just against whom they were fighting. The reorganization of the military could avoid the regional, even nationalist tensions that were developing in other sectors of Yugoslav public life. Lastly, it was assumed that the professional soldiers could effectively work with the nonprofessionals while under attack.<sup>40</sup>

The wave of decentralization that swept Yugoslavia in the late 1960s left the JNA as one federal institution not subject to the control of republican authorities. One of the hopes of GPD was to alter significantly the structure of the JNA.<sup>41</sup> JNA officials argued that allowing the republics to control the military was detrimental to the effective defense of the nation. In other words, the concept

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<sup>40</sup>Remington, 65.

<sup>41</sup> Robert W. Dean, "Civil-Military Relations in Yugoslavia, 1971-1975" Armed Forces and Society 3 (November 1976): 2924.

of local self-management did not apply to defense. This sentiment brought reactions on the republican level. Some Croats demanded, "the sharpest opposition to attempts to separate the concept of nation-wide defense from that of the self-managed society, and to the view that the self-management system is unsuitable for effective conduct of nationwide resistance."<sup>42</sup> The federal government gave into demands and created this defense force under local control.

The creation of the TDF weakened the cohesion of the federal state that it was supposed to unify and defend, and in turn the ability of the military to protect the cohesion of the state. The nationality question played a role. Serbs and Montenegrins had since the beginning of the JNA dominated the officer corps (in 1948 officers from the two nationalities made up over 42 percent of the entire officer corps<sup>43</sup>), although all the Yugoslav nationalities were present. Some Serbs believed that they had an inherent right to be disproportionately represented in the JNA as they had the greatest wartime losses. The total number of dead in Yugoslavia during World War II, by one estimate, was 1,027,000 citizens, of whom 530,000 (51.61 percent) were Serbs, while 192,000 (18.69 percent) were Croats.<sup>44</sup> An overall increase in nationalist tensions in Yugoslavia caused ripples within the military and an assessment of its role. There were some who believed the TDF was becoming the basis for national armies in the respective republics. The JNA had been the glue that held Yugoslavia together; the TDF was the

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<sup>42</sup> Dean op cit, 25.

<sup>43</sup> Johnson, 198.

<sup>44</sup> Drago Roksandrić, Srbi u Hrvatskoj: od 15. Stoljeca do Naših Dana [Serbs in Croatia: From the 15<sup>th</sup> Century to Our Day] (Zagreb: Vjesnik, 1991), 140.



beginning of the break in that relationship. In a like vein, the leadership in the government laid out clearly the threats to Yugoslav security. Among the threats were not only external enemies, but internal ones as well. The military could supposedly exert a tremendous influence on the population. The new military structure would prevent the possibility of internal struggle in the event of war. Colonel Andro Gabelić relates:

The system of internal people's defense is not only the most suitable solution from the standpoint of consolidating a country's independent position in international relations and, naturally, from the angle of defending its integrity and freedom in case it is attacked. This system is also the best guarantee for internal stability and strength in the system, a guarantee for unhampered internal development along progressive lines...such a defense system prevents to the greatest possible degree the exercise of foreign influence on that component of internal life. The conception of nation-wide defense strengthens a country's internal stability.<sup>45</sup>

The Yugoslavs readily identified those seditious internal elements which it had the right to root out: "Cominformists" (or those who sympathized with the Soviet Union), Albanian irredentists, the remnants of the "Ustashe" and other nationalistic groups.<sup>46</sup> Tito sought to create a state wherein all the South Slavs would identify with the state, not their respective nationalities. Any purely nationalist element would only work against the federal system that pushed the Yugoslav state. The JNA and GDP, it was hoped, would weed out the nationalists.

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<sup>45</sup>Mladenović ed., 151.

<sup>46</sup>Gow op cit, 47.

By the 1970s, a new generation had grown up in Yugoslavia that did not have the wartime experience to bind it together. According to Peter Calvocoressi, this new generation of Southern Slav was much more nationalistic and separatist.<sup>47</sup> It increasingly saw federal, becoming more and more Serbian, domination of Yugoslav affairs. Under Tito, the nationality question was the great unspoken problem; he outwardly professed that it had been “solved.” Yugoslav society, especially those in the society who had fought and won on the side of the partisans, held the country together in an alliance. The concept and reality of GPD was one of the first major moves towards decentralization, with the TDF at the republic level. Tito did not imagine that this decentralization would lead to fragmentation. And the JNA was still a multi-national organization, and it was in its best interests to insure the continuation of the centralized Yugoslav state. In 1971, events within Yugoslavia shook the country.

#### **THE FIRST NATIONALIST MOVEMENTS AND RESPONSE BY THE JNA**

In the 1970s, the Yugoslav leadership in Belgrade and the JNA faced new challenges. One problem was political succession, but a resurgence of nationalism aggravated the problem. In 1971, Yugoslavia faced its most dangerous crisis since the Yugoslav-Soviet split in 1948. Robert Dean posits that, “Long-dormant ethno-centric attitudes surfaced in Croatia and raised anew the question of the viability of an integrated multinational Yugoslav state”.<sup>48</sup> Some

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<sup>47</sup>Peter Calvocoressi, World Politics Since 1945 (London and New York: Longman, 1991), 267.

<sup>48</sup>Dean op cit, 18.

of these nationalist concerns stemmed from economic grievances. Croatia was among the wealthier republics. It supported decentralization as a means to ease the economic drain it felt from the other republics. In particular, Croatia looked upon Belgrade, i.e. Serbia, as the main exploiter of Croat wealth. The problem of post-Tito Yugoslavia lay in creating a viable coalition that could respond to the demands of six republics and two autonomous provinces. In June 1971, several constitutional amendments transferred powers to the republics, all powers except defense and foreign policy.<sup>49</sup> In 1971, this devolution ignited a fervor across the state. Croat nationalism surged. The Croat nationalist movement was led by the *Matica Hrvatska* (Croat Home), an organization that pushed for a revival of Croat culture and history.<sup>50</sup> By the end of the year, Croat demands were laid out, calling for changes in the Croat constitution which called for "self determination, including the right to secession."<sup>51</sup>

A poll of military officers of the time showed that 54 percent of the respondents believed that the main danger to the country was not from foreign intervention, but from "nationalism and chauvinism."<sup>52</sup> The nationalist movement in Croatia did not go unnoticed by Tito. In December 1971, he attacked the Croat leaders publicly in broadcasts throughout the nation, then dismissed key Croat officials and severely curtailed or suppressed Croat nationalist organizations. But he did not suppress Croat nationalism by using the

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<sup>49</sup> Dean, 19.

<sup>50</sup> Jelavich, 396.

<sup>51</sup> Jelavich op cit, 397.

<sup>52</sup> Remington op cit, 65.

Party structure. When he could not stop the movement by other means, he called upon the military to defend itself from the internal enemies and ordered its mobilization into Croatia.

The policy of devolution of central government powers and of the defense forces seriously degraded the federal government's ability to keep internal cohesion. The TDF were under republican control and could have been used against the centrally-led JNA. The implementation of GPD degraded the military's ability to control all the military power in the country. The contradictions between the system and the doctrine of defense, designed to deal with an attack from abroad but which also might be needed to quell internal revolt, were of great concern to the military.<sup>53</sup> Tito could not rely on the Party to maintain internal order as there existed serious internal fragmentation. Instead, he counted on the military to restore order within the federation: it became the new defender of the state. The army now more than ever effectively exerted more control than the polity.

The background role of the JNA in the suppression of the Croat movement is unclear. There were rumors of an impending coup d'etat; military leaders became more vocal in their opinions on internal affairs. Dean posits that the JNA "was both prodding the civilian leadership and was prepared to contribute to internal stabilization in Croatia if necessary."<sup>54</sup> Although there were apparently

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<sup>53</sup> Dean, 29.

<sup>54</sup> Dean, 29.

no outward calls for a coup, Tito undoubtedly had the military in mind as December 1971 approached. What is clear in the foreground, however, is that Tito needed the JNA to keep Yugoslavia together. The army would be called upon to settle internal disorder; it was the "ultimate means" to establish order.<sup>55</sup> Tito had increasing difficulties in controlling Yugoslav society and in particular separatist elements in the republics, but the JNA remained loyal to him. The army leaders were willing because of this loyalty to exert the pressure to reign in the republics, especially the territorial units. This power play, however, meant that Yugoslav society on the whole, and the military in particular, would have an increased role in response to this resurgence and subsequent quelling of nationalism in their federation.

#### ***THE CONSTITUTION OF 1974 AND THE REORGANIZATION OF GENERAL PEOPLE'S DEFENSE***

Internal events proved that the concept of defense as laid out in 1968 was insufficient for internal and external security. Problems in forming a collective leadership to replace Tito only exacerbated the issue. According to the 36<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Yugoslav constitution, a twenty-three member Presidency made up of three members each from the republics, two each from the provinces, and Tito was formed. The events in Croatia in 1971 showed the faults of this system. The Constitution of 1974 reduced the Presidency to nine members. More

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<sup>55</sup> Dean, 30.

importantly, at the May 1974 Party Congress the Central Committee membership was reduced from 288 members to 166. The new-found internal status and influence of the military was reflected at this Tenth Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY). During this Congress twenty-one generals and other officers assumed key posts within the Party. A military officer headed the Ministry of Interior for the first time since 1946.<sup>56</sup> An active-duty general was appointed to the twelve-member Executive Committee, the Communist Party's highest body. When all was said and done, the number of JNA appointments to the Central Committee was about equal to that of a province.<sup>57</sup> Slaven Letica calls the JNA's status a "state within a state."<sup>58</sup>

The Constitution of 1974, Yugoslavia's sixth (and last), was an attempt by the then eighty-two year old Tito to organize Yugoslav political life so it could continue after his death. In order to accomplish this he created a series of checks and balances to preclude any nationality from coming to the fore, as well as preventing an individual from acquiring as much power as he himself had enjoyed.<sup>59</sup> The attempt was to disperse power among the republics, both politically and economically. Under a 1969 law, the military had been split into two separate forces and chains of command. The operational army (the JNA) was led by the Supreme Command, the territorial defense units were led by the

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<sup>56</sup>Remington, 66.

<sup>57</sup>Dean, 45-46.

<sup>58</sup>Slaven Letica, Obećana Zemlja [The Promised Land] (Zagreb: Globus International, 1992), 341.

<sup>59</sup>Christopher Bennet, Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse (London: Hurst and Company, 1995), 70.

defense staffs of the republics. The new Constitution of 1974 would reverse this by creating one unifying chain of command. The military remained Yugoslavia's only institution that was both unitary and centralist.<sup>60</sup> The law was codified under Article 240 of the constitution of 1974.<sup>61</sup> As Gow points out, the changes in the military's structure did not come from ideological guidance but rather from the influence of external factors and domestic events. And the army's position in the Croat unrest of 1971 was crucial for future positioning. Because it could play a political role in the response to the unrest, it fulfilled part of its socio-political role, the role incumbent upon legitimacy from the society.<sup>62</sup> The Constitution of 1974 changed the structure of the armed forces from republican back to centralist control. In an ominous foreshadowing of the events of the 1990s, the Federal President became Supreme Commander of all the armed forces. The JNA was far and away the leading military force in the region, and any power the republican defense forces might have garnered was wrestled from them by the declaration of the president as the titular head. The new constitution was a paradox in itself. On the one hand it devolved power to the republics in all areas - all areas, that is, except defense. At the same time the new constitution decentralized politics, it centralized all the armed forces, including the republican militaries, under the federal army.

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<sup>60</sup>Bennet, 75.

<sup>61</sup> In addition, Article 238 stipulated that it was illegal for any citizen to capitulate, to accept or recognize the occupation of the country, or to prevent others from putting forth resistance. Any of these actions constituted high treason. (Curtis, 235)

<sup>62</sup>Gow, 50.

The 1970s were for Yugoslavia and Tito a time of relative internal peace and prosperity as the concept of “worker’s self-management” seemed to be proving itself to be a viable technique for Socialism, and decentralization of power seemed an option for the continuance of the Yugoslav entity. But the 1970s was a facade also. The Yugoslav state could last only as long as the “President for Life,” Tito, lived; the country’s economic miracle was clearly dependent on foreign loans which his successor would one day need to repay. The state as laid out in the Constitution of 1974 did indeed last until Tito’s death in 1980. From a political standpoint, Tito seemed Solomonic in his decisions to give power back to the republics. But one organization was untouched by the decentralization drive. Under Tito’s leadership, indeed from the very beginning of the second Yugoslavia, the military had incrementally increased its access to the political decision making process, strengthening its own political position as well.

The military was by then retrenched in the Yugoslav political process. In 1978, there were about 100,000 Party members in the JNA. Over 98 percent of all commanding officers were members of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY), according to official sources.<sup>63</sup> Army officers held posts within the government. The army took control over the civilian security apparatus in 1974. By the Eleventh Party congress in 1978, the number of high-ranking officers within the Yugoslav administration increased with the addition of

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<sup>63</sup>Slobodan Stanković, The End of the Tito Era (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1981), 48.



six generals to regional Party organizations, an increase of about 14 percent among the Central committee membership.<sup>64</sup> Slobodan Stanković relates that before Tito's death, the army remained the country's - and the Party's - strongest supporter, the JNA's generals were constantly hailed as the country's ultimate saviors.<sup>65</sup> Dr. Jovan Djordjević, in *The Political System: a Contribution to the Science of Man and Self-Management*, wrote that the army remained one of the most important organs of the system, an instrument not only of the country's defense but also of its politics, particularly of the sociopolitical organizations [of the party].<sup>66</sup>

In an official JNA document, Nikolaj Marcescu writes,

The armed forces are armed military formations of working people and citizens of the nationalities and ethnic minorities of the SFRY... Their social character and role are determined by our social relations, which are those of self-management. They constitute an expression of the resoluteness, readiness and military organization of the working people and citizens and of all nationalities and ethnic minorities to oppose any armed aggression.<sup>67</sup>

Tito intended that the military's role in transcending ethnicity and its centralist foundation would serve to increase the cohesiveness of the state. In fact, just the opposite occurred in the decade after his death.

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<sup>64</sup>Pedro Ramet, ed., *Yugoslavia in the 1980s* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985), 59.

<sup>65</sup>Stanković, 51.

<sup>66</sup>Stanković op cit, 51.

<sup>67</sup>Nikolaj Macesku, "Defense School: the Yugoslavia Armed Forces--Bulwark of Our Defense" Translated from Belgrade's *Front*, in *JPRS Translations on Eastern Europe*, 4 Feb 81.

## THE YUGOSLAV NATIONAL ARMY IN THE 1980S

After Tito's death in 1980, the Yugoslav political scene was in shambles. The ensuing years would be the real test of whether the multi-national state could exist without Tito's intervention. And the military, as the only true centrist organization and flush with new-found political prowess, would play an important role in the survival of the state. Recalling the tenets of the Constitution of 1974, which was supposed to strengthen the principles of decentralized republican control and self-management, the Constitution in the 1980s served to cement the centralized control of the LCY, as well as to increase the political influence of the JNA.<sup>68</sup>

Fred Singleton, a historian of the region, advanced several possible scenarios for the fate of Yugoslavia after Tito's death. The first two dealt with the possibility of Soviet intervention, but increasing international pressure over the Soviet Union's involvement in Afghanistan made either of them unlikely. The third possible scenario was internal dissension based on the question of nationality and economic tensions. As the industrialized northern states, i.e. Slovenia and Croatia pushed for further decentralization because of the inordinate amount of money being shifted to the southern republics, the poorer republics pushed for a continuation of the unity of the states. The program was satisfactory to no one. It did not spur economic growth in Kosovo and Macedonia, for

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<sup>68</sup>Gavriel D. Ra'anan, Yugoslavia After Tito (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1977), 42.

example, and stirred anger in the northern republics.<sup>69</sup> The Yugoslav state bureaucracy and national economy went through a series of iterations immediately after Tito's death, especially those that dealt with collective leadership.<sup>70</sup>

### **THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ARMED FORCES**

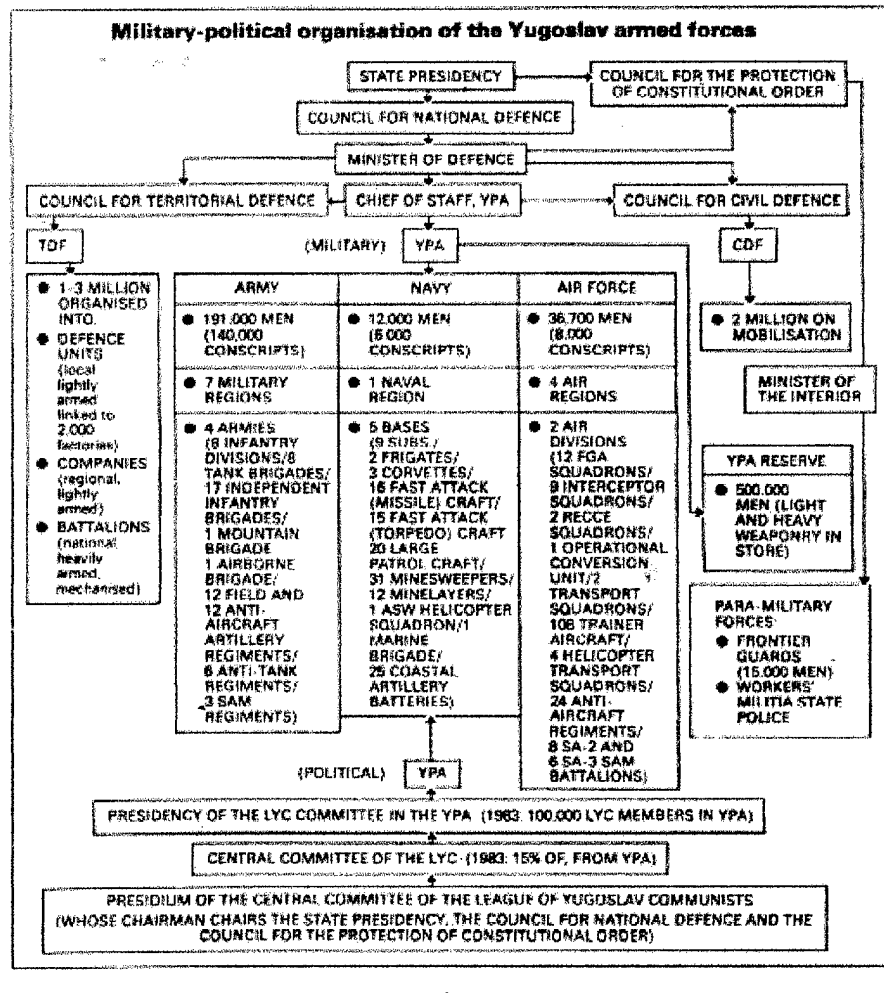
Before continuing with the political-military situation of the 1980s, it is important to understand the military, its role and its organization. Throughout the last two decades of Yugoslavia, the military was split into two separate entities controlled by the High Command. Figure 1 depicts the military-political relationship, while Figure 2 demonstrates the federal military organization. Figures 3-5 depict the organization of each district.

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<sup>69</sup> Constantine P. Danopoulos and Kostas G. Messas, eds., Crises in the Balkans: Views From the Participants (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), 10.

<sup>70</sup> Rezun, 12.

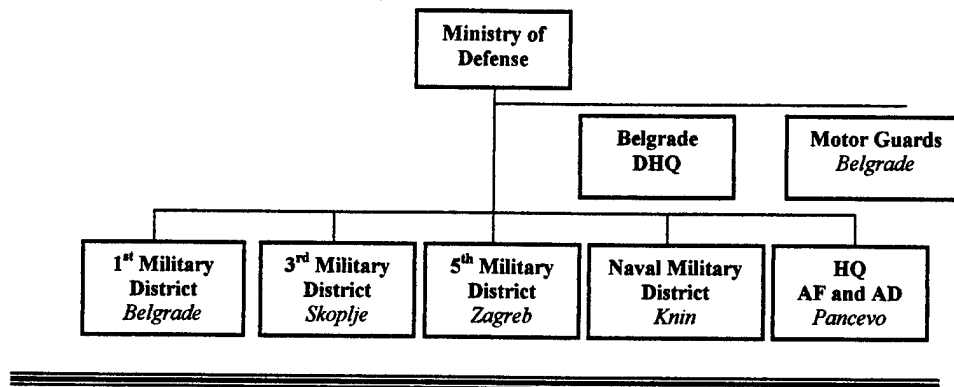
Figure 1. Military-Political Organization of the Yugoslav Armed Forces



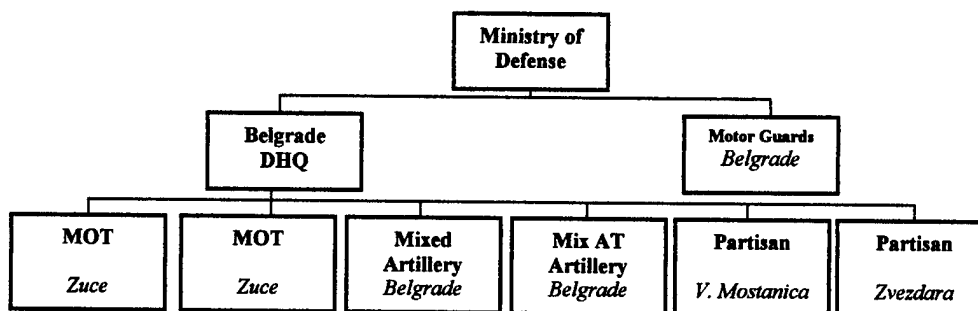
Source: "The Yugoslav People's Army," *Armed Forces* 6 (1987): 19.

The splitting of military forces split into five military districts reflected the commitment to disperse the armed forces throughout the whole of the country. The psychological benefits transcended any pure military rationale, but it helped "spread the wealth" of the military's spending.

Figure 2. Yugoslav Military Forces – Command Structure

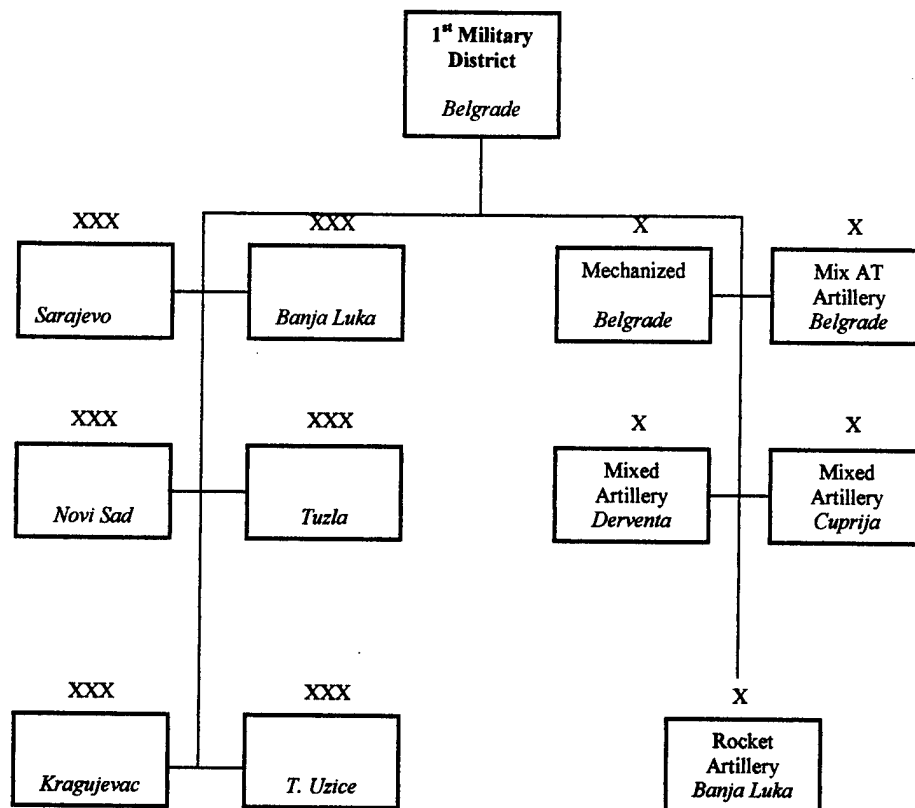


Yugoslav Armed Forces – Central Subordinated Units of the MoD



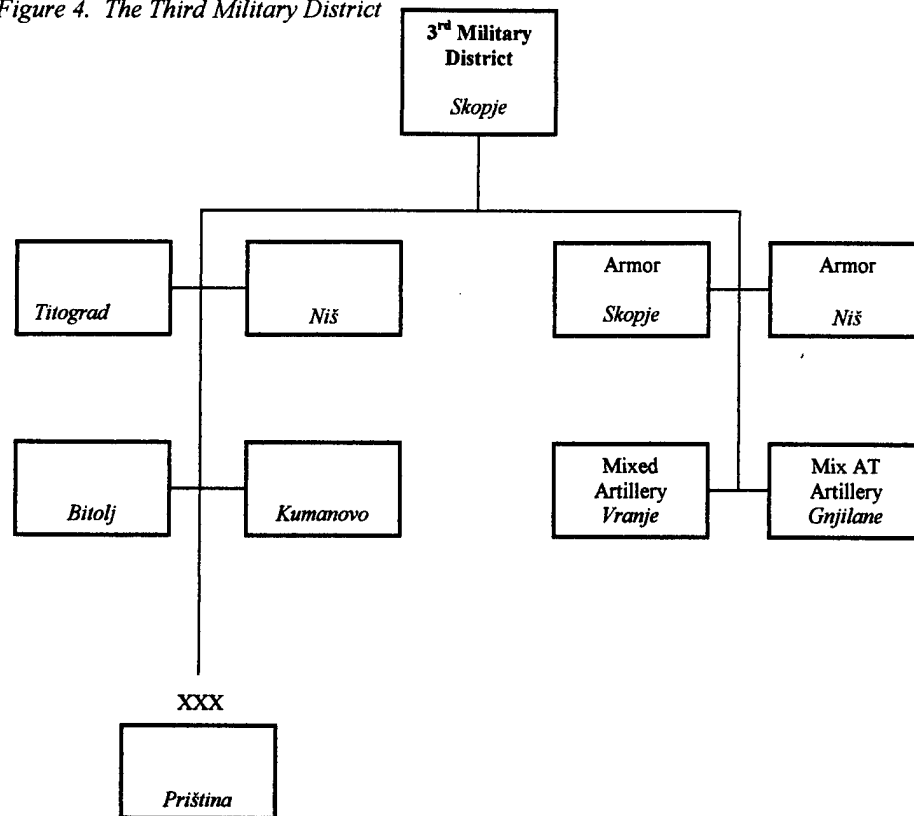
Source: "Yugoslavia's Armed Forces – Order of Battle," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, August 1991, 367.

Figure 3. The First Military District



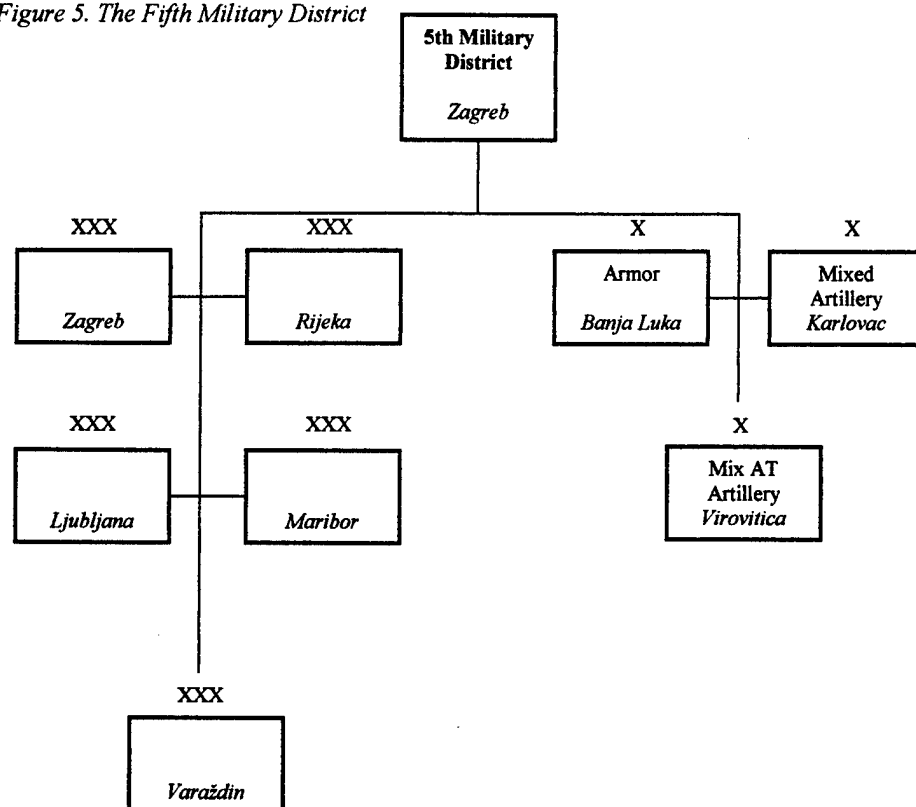
Source: "Yugoslavia's Armed Forces – Order of Battle," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, August 1991, 368.

Figure 4. The Third Military District



Source: "Yugoslavia's Armed Forces - Order of Battle," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, August 1991, 369.

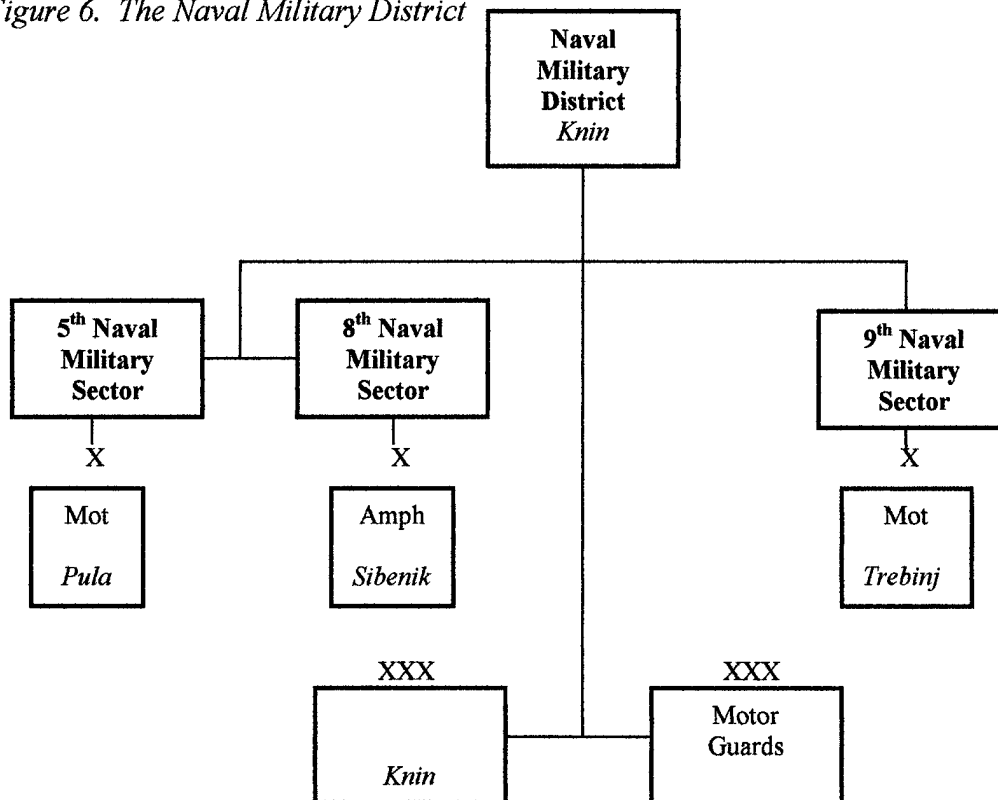
Figure 5. The Fifth Military District



Source: "Yugoslavia's Armed Forces – Order of Battle," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, August 1991, 369.

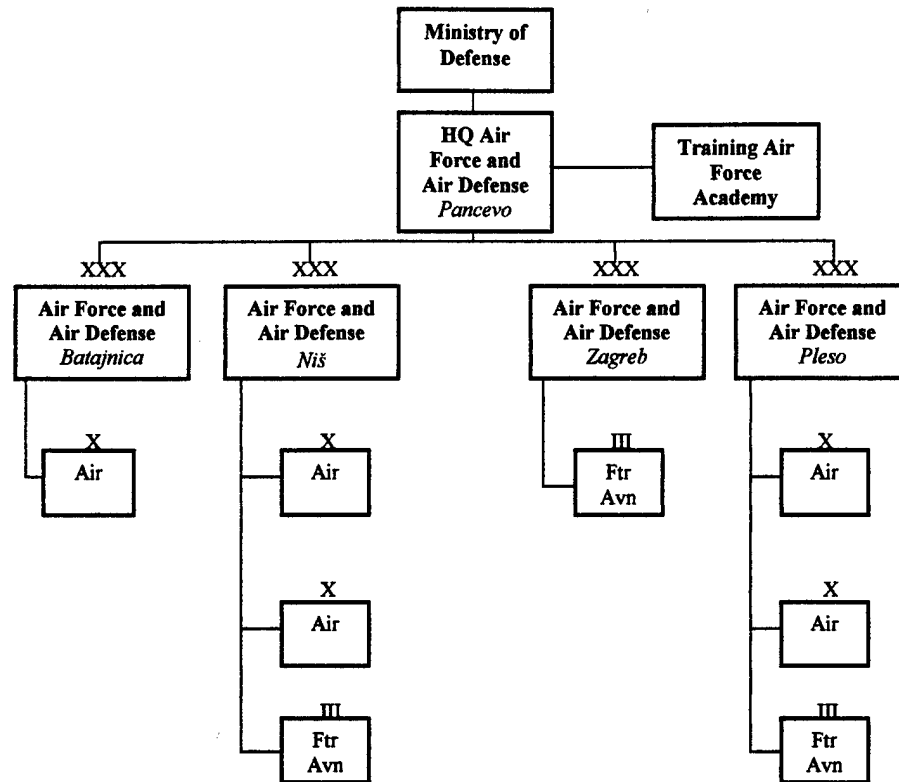


Figure 6. The Naval Military District



Source: "Yugoslavia's Armed Forces – Order of Battle," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, August 1991, 369.

Figure 7. Air Defense and Air Defense Units



Source: "Yugoslavia's Armed Forces – Order of Battle," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, August 1991, 370.

## **THE ARMED FORCES**

To answer the question of how the Yugoslav military evolved into the form it took in the 1980s, it is crucial to understand the makeup of the branches.. Until the end of the Yugoslav state, the military consisted of the army, navy, and air force, divided into four military regions and the military district of Split, as depicted above. The military had more than 180,000 soldiers, about 100,000 of whom were conscripts from the various nationalities. While all branches were involved in the breakup of Yugoslavia, the Army played the biggest role

*Army* - The army was largest of the armed services with 140,000 active-duty soldiers, about 90,000 of whom were conscripts from all the republics. It could call upon an additional 450,000 reservists in time of conflict. Its command structure was split into three military regions, with ten army corps headquarters. These regions were responsible for defense in three strategic regions: Slovenia and northern Croatia; eastern Croatia, Vojvodina and Serbia; and Kosovo and Macedonia. Although seemingly well equipped with small arms and armor, the JNA had serious deficiencies within its logistical system, air defense, and more-advanced weapons systems.

*Air Force* – while the air force had far fewer conscripts than the Army, its ultimate role was no less vital for the unification the entire military enforced. The air force had more than 32,000 service members, but less than 4,000 were conscripts because of the high level of technical competence required of air force

personnel. The air force had a multi-purpose role of ground attack, military transport, and air defense systems (both aerial and ground-based). The main purpose of the air force was to help stave off attacks against the ground forces as long as possible, in the traditional doctrine of defense of the nation.

*Navy* – The navy also served as a unifying force for the nation. Although heavily manned with Croats, the navy had 10,000 sailors, with 4,000 conscripts, many from throughout Yugoslavia, among them. The naval forces, including coastal defense artillery batteries and 900 marines, were essentially a coastal defense force tasked to prevent enemy landings anywhere along the 1,500 kilometers of coastline and islands off the coast.<sup>71</sup>

The Yugoslav armed forces by tradition and mandate in theory were supposed to transcend nationalism and reflect the Yugoslav state's ethnic composition. Tito knew that this would be necessary to stabilize the armed forces, and indeed the entire society, after his death. If the military were not stable and egalitarian, then the survival of the party and the entire Yugoslav state would be in jeopardy.

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<sup>71</sup>The above discussion of the military forces was condensed from Glenn E. Curtis, ed., *Yugoslavia: A Country Study*, 243-252.

## **ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF THE NATIONAL ARMY**

The Yugoslav state by definition was a nation of Southern Slavs, or those peoples who spoke a Slavic dialect indigenous to the region. But Yugoslavia also recognized non-Slavs, e.g. Albanians and Hungarians, as members of the state. One of the goals of the Yugoslav government was to maintain an equal representation of the various nationalities. The federal armed forces were intended to be a unifying force among all Yugoslav nationalities. But, as in the case of other aspects of Yugoslav life and politics, this was not to be the reality in the JNA. Even at the beginning, the ethnic makeup of the National Liberation Army was unrepresentative of Yugoslav society. At the end of World War II, the NLA was made up of 75-80 percent Serbs and Montenegrins, 15-20 percent Croats and 3.8 percent Slovenes, well askew of their proportional representations. This trend continued into the 1970s and 1980s with an unrepresentative proportion of Serbs and Montenegrins in the officer corps: Serbs were 64.3 percent of the officers (39 percent of the population); Montenegrins, 13.2 (2.5); Croats, 11.7 (2.2); Slovenes, 5.0 (0.8); and Macedonians 3.2 (0.5). In the general officer ranks the situation was no better, for 46 percent of the generals were Serbian, Montenegrins 19 percent, 19 percent Croats, Slovenes 6 percent, and Macedonians and "Muslims" made up the balance. In the High Command, the mix was a little more proportional with Serbs underrepresented and Croats overrepresented.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup>The figures listed in this paragraph were condensed from Gow, op cit., 54.

At the beginning of the 1980s, the mixture was obviously in favor of the Serbs and Montenegrins, as demonstrated below:

Table 1 - Ethnic Composition of the Regular Army

Nationalities	In Professional Military	In Population
Serbs	60	39.7
Croats	12.6	22.1
Yugoslavs	6.7	1.3
Montenegrins	6.2	2.5
Slovenes	2.8	8.2
Macedonians	6.3	5.8
Muslims	2.4	8.4
Albanians	0.6	6.4
Hungarians	0.7	2.3
Others	1.6	3.3

Source: Anton Bebler, "The Military in the Yugoslav Crisis," *Sudost Europa*, 133.

Towards the end of the 1980s, the military's ethnic mix was as follows:

Table 2 - Ethnic Composition of the Regular Army

Nationality	Regulars (%)	In Population
Serbs	42.6	36.3
Croats	14.2	19.7
Yugoslavs	10	5.4
Montenegrins	9.4	2.5
Slovenes	6.4	7.8
Macedonians	6.3	5.9
Muslims	5.6	8.9
Albanians	3.15	7.7
Hungarians	1	1.9
Others	1	3.9

Source: "Yugoslavia 1991-Armed Forces in Conflict," *Jane's Intelligence Review* (September 1991) 396.

Bebler posits in a work written before the outbreak of war in 1991 that communist efforts at equality of all nations was half-hearted at best, for the Yugoslav military continued the pre-war policies of excluding certain ethnic national minorities and ethnic majorities, especially those among groups traditionally "hostile" to the Yugoslav state (Germans, Italians, Turks, Greeks, Hungarians and Albanians) as well as Gypsies. The discrimination was rarely outright, but standards in education and language, as well as disinterest in the military as a profession, were among the main culprits for the under-representation.<sup>73</sup> But the Constitution of 1974 called for a legally-mandated recruitment of all nationalities into the professional military. Article 242 states that, "As regards the composition of the officer corps and the promotion to senior commanding and directing posts in the Yugoslav People's Army, the principle of the most proportional representation of the Republics and Autonomous Provinces shall be applied."<sup>74</sup> Ra'anan believes that the ethnic composition of the JNA could be viewed by "dissident nationalists" as a tool of the Serbs.<sup>75</sup> The Serbs continued to dominate the military for a variety of reasons. Among them were the economic opportunities available in Croatia and Slovenia which were much better than in the southern republics, making the military a less attractive career option. The most southern republic, Macedonia, did not have an adequate educational system to train enough potential officer candidates; therefore, Macedonians were

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<sup>73</sup>Bebler, "Political Pluralism...", 115.

<sup>74</sup>Bebler, "Political Pluralism...", 115.

<sup>75</sup>Ra'anan, 94.

numerically fewer in the officer ranks than the other nationalities (but still proportionally in-line).

Warren Zimmerman, the last US ambassador to Yugoslavia (until 1992), believes that despite the officer corps of the JNA being over 50 percent Serbian, there was nothing inherently nefarious about this, although the Serb officers probably received preferential treatment over candidates from other ethnic groups.<sup>76</sup> When Ambassador Zimmerman first assumed his post in 1989, before the republican elections, he did not note a bias in the high command; in fact, he claimed that the army was a stabilizing force within Yugoslavia and therefore a positive entity. His positive opinion of the JNA changed shortly afterwards. He claims that the JNA "became the last standard-bearer of Tito's Communism." The JNA's complicity with the regime brought great rewards for its members. By the end of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in 1990, the army had a mix of rigid ideology and little civilian oversight: "A deadly combination...it was becoming doctrinaire, narcissistic, paranoid, flaccid and unruly."<sup>77</sup> The combination of being stacked with Serbs in the commanding ranks, the lack of a strong central authority, and being politically conservative led the military into a precarious position in civil-military relations. The Serbs also had the most to lose in the "new" Yugoslavia. They were the most widely dispersed nationality in the federation; disintegration of the federation would most affect the Serbs

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<sup>76</sup>Warren Zimmerman, Origins of a Catastrophe (New York: Times Books, 1996), 86.

<sup>77</sup>Zimmerman, 87.



Yugoslavia-wide. It is little wonder, then, that the military (with its Serb majority and reliance on the central government) began to look to Belgrade for direction.

### **THE 1980S = THE POST-TITO ERA AND THE ROAD TO THE END**

With the death of Comrade Tito in 1980, a test to the Yugoslav state, and the military, quickly surfaced. The events in Kosovo in March 1981 wherein 10,000-20,000 protesters demanded republican status created a test that the military failed, even though it succeeded in restoring order. Kosovo, the “cradle” of the Serbian nation, is populated by a majority (over 90 percent in 1991) of ethnic Albanians.<sup>78</sup> Despite the successes by the military units and internal security forces in quelling the disturbance, they created more problems than they resolved. The soldiers succeeded in holding the federation together, but they eroded their legitimacy while doing so. According to Remington, Albanians viewed military forces in the region as occupiers who repressed their legitimate complaints against the regime.<sup>79</sup> Albanian soldiers in the JNA were isolated within the armed forces because they were suspected of involvement in the promotion of force to subvert the federation. An incident involving a 20-year-old Albanian conscript shooting fellow soldiers in a JNA barracks in 1987 helped fuel the flames of alleged conspiracy against the other nationalities. The result was an increase in Serbian nationalism, precipitating the rise of Slobodan Milošević. In

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<sup>78</sup>Steven L. Burg, “Why Yugoslavia Fell Apart.” *Current History* (November 1993): 360.

<sup>79</sup>Bokovoy et al., 66.

fact, by 1987, writers on the region were predicting an increasingly active role of the Serb-dominated JNA in Yugoslav civil affairs. Marko Milivojević writes that,

As Yugoslavia's crisis worsens, and while the ruling LCY (League of Communists of Yugoslavia) grows, the Political influence of the YPA<sup>80</sup> grows, as does popular support for its views among Serbs...If, as seems likely, the leaders of the YPA perceive that a worsening domestic situation can only be reversed by stern measures, then a direct bid for power by the YPA may follow.<sup>81</sup>

Although the predicted JNA coup never materialized, Milivojević's statement demonstrated the potential power that the JNA enjoyed within the region, enough that it could possibly stage a coup to maintain the federation.<sup>82</sup> Anton Bebler says that, "the symbiotic relationship between the ruling party and the army as well as the results of several years of indoctrination in the ranks had potent consequences when Tito's one-party system began to fail." He concludes that the JNA was able to stonewall and then openly criticize the reversing of Titoism, liberalization and pluralization of politics, claiming that these initiatives would foster capitalism and inter-nation conflict.<sup>83</sup> But the Constitution of 1974, to which the military adhered, prohibited any sort of intervention without the proper impetus. The army could interfere in internal politics, according to General Ivan Misković, "only in cases where the constitutional order was

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<sup>80</sup> YPA = Yugoslavia People's Army or JNA.

<sup>81</sup> Marko Milivojević, "The Yugoslavia People's Army," *Armed Forces* 6 (1987): 19.

<sup>82</sup> In fact, Milovan Djilas agreed that the military played a larger role in Yugoslavia politics, but lacked the will to conduct a coup.

<sup>83</sup> Seroška and Pavlović, eds., 132.

threatened.”<sup>84</sup> Despite these constitutional constraints, in practical terms the military could use its coercive abilities to achieve its political ambitions. It was the JNA’s pan-Yugoslav character which became paramount. Civilians and military personnel alike recognized its role as an “integral part of society.” The military was not “a quiet island on which there is no sensitivity to the troubles stirred up in Yugoslavia...(It) guard(s) the destiny of this society.”<sup>85</sup>

The military leadership was obviously disturbed by the trends within Yugoslavia, especially the waves of democratization and pluralization waves within Yugoslav politics: the call for private enterprise to become the “pillar of the economy” were heard along with those demanding multi-party elections. A Serbian branch, no less, of the Yugoslav polity was very critical of the JNA’s privileged political status and its priority within the national budget, and in the 1980s called for a diminishing of those influences.<sup>86</sup> The discontent within the Yugoslav military establishment did not go unnoticed by the leader of Serbia, Slobodan Milošević, the former banker and leader of the Serbian Communists.

#### **THE RISE OF SLOBODAN MILOŠEVIĆ AND THE ROLE OF THE JNA**

At the end of the 1980s, Milošević, the unabashedly Serb nationalist, set out on a course to forge alliances within the Yugoslav polity to increase his

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<sup>84</sup>Gow op cit., 72.

<sup>85</sup>Gow op cit., 73-74.

<sup>86</sup>V.P. Gagnon Jr., “Ethnic Nationalism and International Conflict” International Security 19 (Winter 1994/95): 146.

political influence. According to Ramet, one of Milošević's goals was to stem the tide of devolution, with the ultimate aim of isolating and re-subordinating Croatia and Slovenia, the country's two wealthiest republics and strongest advocates for decentralization. In so doing, he looked to the Serb-led JNA to help him.<sup>87</sup>

Ramet lists four stages of development in Milošević's rise to power. And the JNA was an accomplice in these stages, either in its lack of action or by direct complicity. The first involved the development of a "cult of personality," reminiscent of other communist leaders of the region, including Tito himself. The second stage was the reestablishment of Serbian control over the autonomous regions within its borders, a move which endeared himself to the pro-Serbian element within the region, but clearly alienated Croats, Slovenes, Macedonians and Bosnians, not to mention the Albanians within Kosovo! The third step in his run to power was the elimination of the precepts of the constitution of 1974, i.e. the move toward re-centralization of the government in Belgrade, and reduction of the power of the six republics. The fourth and final stage entailed moving toward a market economy and democratization, albeit under definitions understood and written by Milošević himself. All these aims were for the furtherance of his power, and the increase of Serbia's power within Yugoslavia.<sup>88</sup> Gow notes that the JNA in the late 1980s also looked for alliances with other centers of political power,<sup>89</sup> so Milošević was a seemingly natural choice for

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<sup>87</sup>Sabrina Ramet, Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia, 2d ed., (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), 18.

<sup>88</sup>Sabrina Ramet, 228-29.

<sup>89</sup>Gow, 82.

alliance within the existing government. The most important aspect for this discussion is the systematic garnering of power by the Serbs and Milošević, the prevailing mood making it relatively simple for co-optation of the military by the regime. The military leadership was of course becoming increasingly wary of the events in Croatia and Slovenia: the federal government was its lifeblood.

In 1989, the JNA consumed over 57 percent of the nation's budget. The military leadership was concerned about the changes in the governing process which could possibly affect the budgetary process. If a multiparty system materialized, a debate about the size of military spending might ensue and a new democratically elected government might not be as sympathetic to the military as the Communists were. After all, a significant portion of the ruling government was filled with members of the military. In the same year, disagreements between Slovenia and Serbia reached their apex: the Slovenes' quarrel with the Serbs was both economic and political, gathering force along with the rise in power of Milošević, according to Ambassador Zimmerman.<sup>90</sup> The Slovenes, with the only relatively ethnically homogenous republic in Yugoslavia, saw themselves as having the best chance for a true democracy within the changing arena of politics. The Slovenes were willing to take on the Serbs to achieve their aims, thrusting internal reforms upon the Yugoslav political system.

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<sup>90</sup>Zimmerman, 29.

The Extraordinary Fourteenth Party Congress met in January 1990 in the midst of a wave of discontent provoked by renewed Slovene and Croat pushes towards a confederation-style of governance. In an eighteen-point document, the leaders of these two republics called for free elections in an answer to the growing crisis of legitimization of the LCY. The Slovene delegation also forwarded proposals that would change the name of the LCY as well as depoliticize the JNA.<sup>91</sup> In effect, the Slovene and Croat delegations pushed for further decentralization of the government, a move, which I have previously noted, was in direct opposition to the aims of the Milošević power structure and his allies. The military structure was again none too pleased with the proposals. The Extraordinary Fourteenth Party Congress met in what was to be among the most tumultuous periods leading to Yugoslavia's dissolution. The JNA's delegation of 68 military members, of whom 40 were Serb and Montenegrin, was prepared to show its unity with the state in documents presented to the Congress. In fact, there was not even a hint of dissention among the military's ranks.<sup>92</sup> The military leadership believed in democratic reform, but was not sure whether that democratization should take place in the one-party or multi-party systems. Following the lead of Slovenia, communist organs in other republics pushed for more open political competition through free elections. The army's power *vis-a-vis* its position within the political decision-making process was threatened by these events. Robin Remington asserts that, "There was open anxiety at the prospect of depoliticizing the JNA; fear that it would amount to

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<sup>91</sup>Lukic and Lynch, eds., 164.

<sup>92</sup>Seroka and Pavlović, 133.

'excommunication' of the 75,000 League of Communists-JNA members from social and political life."<sup>93</sup> However, despite public pronouncements to the contrary made earlier, the military delegates to the Party Congress eventually agreed to political pluralism, abolition of the constitutional provision for "the leading role of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia," and free elections.<sup>94</sup> Despite the rhetoric, the military refused to depoliticize completely, disapproving of the consequences of pluralization in Yugoslav politics. In fact, the military leadership attempted to create a new "League of Communists - Movement for Yugoslavia." Early in the Congress, the Slovene delegation left protesting the staunch conservatism of the regime. The Slovene departure "neutered" the LCY's leading role, pushing Yugoslavia toward a democratic governance.<sup>95</sup>

### **THE FINAL CRISIS**

The late 1980s brought nationalism in Yugoslavia to the fore again after its sometimes violent quelling in the previous decades. The polity found itself with serious challenges to its legitimacy, and the state was on a path to destruction. The military would play a pivotal role in whether future events would be peaceful, or if they would end violently.

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<sup>93</sup> Robin Remington, "The Yugoslav Army in Transition," in Danopoulos and Zirker eds., 1996, 161.

<sup>94</sup> Seroka and Pavlović, 134.

<sup>95</sup> Gow, 120.

Observers of the region note that in the months before the outbreak of hostilities the armed forces still shared the conviction with the Serbian leadership that Yugoslavia must remain united with a strong central government.<sup>96</sup> Slovenia had threatened secession in a 60-day ultimatum to the central government in December 1990. The military would not interfere as long as there were ongoing talks about the future of Yugoslavia, but “under no circumstances would it allow armed interethnic conflict or civil war.”<sup>97</sup> It also displayed intolerance toward border changes without prior agreements, in an ominous warning to Slovenia and Croatia should they try to unilaterally attempt to break from Yugoslavia. Milošević and the JNA hoped to persuade these republican leaders that they should not make any hasty decisions about leaving the federation. A cycle of intransigence ensued, according to Lenard Cohen, wherein the leaders of Slovenia and Croatia began to expand their local military forces, i.e. their respective TDF, in fear of needing to break out of the federation by force.<sup>98</sup> The leaders of the central government and their JNA allies, unwilling to let the federation change dramatically into a loose confederation, exerted pressure on the governments in Ljubljana and Zagreb to forego their hopes for sovereignty and to dissolve their military units.<sup>99</sup> David Isby agrees with Cohen’s observations. He believed that

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<sup>96</sup>Girard C. Steichen, “Yugoslavia Army’s Stance in Crisis Sparks Debate,” The Christian Science Monitor, March 28, 1991.

<sup>97</sup>Steichen.

<sup>98</sup>Lenard J. Cohen, “The Disintegration of Yugoslavia,” Current History (November 1992): 372.

<sup>99</sup>Cohen, 372.



as the crises of 1990-91 progressed, the military was “a voice for central authority” opposing all those who would destroy Yugoslavia.<sup>100</sup>

The country was heading into a conflict that everyone seemed to see coming, yet which no one could seem to find a way to resolve before its arrival. As the Communist Party began to fall apart in 1990, and when it finally met its demise in 1991, the military was without political leadership, so it turned to the entity that it knew best, namely the government in Belgrade. The military leadership still tended to be very strong supporters of communist ideology as it had enjoyed the greatest benefits under the system. And, as previously noted, the military leadership was predominantly Serbian. By 1991, the only true central government left was the Serb-dominated entity in Belgrade. The switch from Federal Yugoslavia to Serbia seems now almost preordained. Isby notes that “the vision of the military as unifier has now been overshadowed by the military as advocate of and protector of Serbs and Serbia, particularly as far as most of the high command are concerned.”<sup>101</sup> General Veljko Kadijević, the Federal Minister of Defense and the Chief of the JNA’s Supreme Command General Staff, describes how in the meetings of the Yugoslav Presidency and the General Staff, on May 12, 14 and 15, 1991, the Presidency rejected the General Staff’s suggestion for a state of emergency. Barring resignation of all members of the General Staff, the only option was,

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<sup>100</sup>David C. Isby, “Yugoslavia 1991- Armed Forces in Conflict,” Jane’s Intelligence Review (September 1991): 396.

<sup>101</sup>Isby, 396.

... that the military, relying on the political forces in the federation and in the republics which represent peoples wishing to live in Yugoslavia, with a peaceful separation from those wishing to leave it, continue ensuring such a policy. Translated into the practical language of the actual situation, this meant, among other things, the protection and defense of the Serbian people and gathering the JNA within the borders of the future Yugoslavia. However, the second part of the task – concentration of the JNA – had to be adapted operatively and time-wise to the realization of the first part. With the participation of the appropriate personalities who held similar opinions on the resolution of the politics of the crisis, this option was accepted by all, without a single exception.<sup>102</sup>

When Slovenia's declaration of independence came on June 25, 1991, the JNA's military response came as surprise to many within and without Yugoslavia. But in retrospect it was inevitable. Looking backwards at Yugoslavia seven years later, one could conclude the military should not have sided with Milošević. Instead, it should have waited in the wings for the government to resolve the political problems. Only then should the JNA have brokered a compromise with the respective republican leaders, avoiding Yugoslavia's blood letting. When the military is too involved in state politics, there can be disastrous consequences. Unfortunately for Yugoslavia, the events in Slovenia were only the beginning. The Slovenes got off relatively "easy" with a dozen casualties. The JNA lost 45 conscripts. Warfare would soon erupt elsewhere in the country: first in Croatia and then in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

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<sup>102</sup> Vladimir Goati, "The Disintegration of Yugoslavia: The Role of Political Elites," Nationality Papers 25 (September 1997): 463.

At the end of four years of war, Yugoslavia is a shadow of its former self. Only Serbia and Montenegro are still joined. Slovenia, Macedonia and Croatia are independent; Bosnia is a fractured land with foreign troops keeping the warring factions apart.

The Yugoslav National Army had its beginning and its end within fifty years. It met a violent death along with Yugoslavia. By attempting to keep the federation together, and at the same time trying to maintain its internal integrity, the JNA turned to what it perceived its best chance at maintaining central authority - the Serbian-dominated government. Throughout its history the JNA had been an inseparable part of the government, and the government relied on the JNA to keep it in power. This relationship would logically lead only to disaster. And it did. The JNA began in a "people's war." Ironically, it also died in one.

## **CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN SLOVENIA**

### **Slovenia and the Yugoslav National Army**

In the second part of my thesis, I chronicle and analyze the relationship of the citizens of Slovenia to the Yugoslav People's Army, beginning with the relationship at the end of World War II to Slovenia's independence from Yugoslavia. I also discuss some of the current research on civil-military relationships in newly democratic states and I then offer an in-depth analysis of civil-military relations in independent Slovenia. My central argument is that Slovenia has a valid model of civil-military relations that other Balkan nations, especially the former Yugoslav republics, must study when and if they fully accept democratic principles.

Beginning with the JNA-Slovene relationship, I argue that it is relevant because the Slovene leadership saw that an unbalanced civil-military relationship could have disastrous results. Therefore, it sought a civil-military relationship more in line with the entrenched democracies of the West. The relationship between the people of Slovenia and the JNA goes back to the very beginnings of the communist dominance of their territory. The borders of modern Slovenia were enlarged by about one-third after World War II when the JNA ousted the Italian fascists from the region.<sup>103</sup> Slovenia declared that these lands had

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<sup>103</sup> The post-war Italian government's hotly contested the Yugoslavs claim that the Italian nationals ousted from Slovenia were somehow fascists. This debate has had long-lasting consequences for Slovenia's entry into European security and economic organizations.

wrongfully been given to Italy after World War I so the return of the northwestern territory was greeted favorably by the Slovenes. (Some neo-fascists in the Italian parliament claim even today that these lands should still be part of Italy.) Initially the relationship between Slovenia and the government in Belgrade was relatively amicable. Yugoslavia protected Slovenia from its neighbors (the much-famed Ljubljana gap was to be a main transit route for invading forces from east and west) and Slovenia would be an economic and intellectual asset for the rest of the Yugoslav state.

Relating specifically to Slovenia's relationship with the JNA, in the years of Tito's governance (1945-1980) several Slovenes had been active in the inner circle of his closest advisers.<sup>104</sup> Edvard Kardelj, appointed by Tito to be in charge of foreign policy, was a Slovene. (In fact, Kardelj was among the top three military commanders – with Tito and Andrija Hebrang - in the battle against the occupiers in World War II. Kardelj was responsible for the military activities in Slovenia.<sup>105</sup>) As a long-time member of the Presidium, the elite group that formed Yugoslav policy under the tutelage of Tito, Kardelj had a say in Yugoslav defense policy. But, according to Anton Bebler, the most influential Slovenes in the field of defense came under the auspices of the JNA and the Territorial Defense units created in 1968.<sup>106</sup> These military leaders, able to influence both

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<sup>104</sup> Worth noting is that Tito was one-half Slovene and one-half Croat, although he was born in modern-day Croatia.

<sup>105</sup> Ivan Aralica, *Zadah Ocvalog Imperija* [The Stench of the Faded Empire] (Zagreb: Znanje, 1991), 87.

<sup>106</sup> Danopoulos and Zirker, eds., 195.

policy formulation and its implementation, were much more powerful than any other Slovene in the Yugoslav government. But, of course, the most influential individual was Tito himself.

As previously asserted, Tito had been the *de facto* and *de jure* chief of the JNA due to his position as life-long president of the republic. In the decade after Tito's death in 1980, two Slovene politicians each served in the one-year term of the Yugoslav presidency, and in so doing, they were the titular head of the Yugoslav armed forces. According to Article 313 of the Yugoslav Constitution of 1974, the "Presidency of the SFRY is the supreme body in charge of the administration and command of the Armed Forces of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in war and peace."<sup>107</sup> Articles 315, 316, and 317 further detailed the role of the presidency. Not to digress further, the Constitution in effect made clear the role of the presidency and its members in the defense of the nation. But as part of the shared power structure of the presidency intentionally set up by Tito, the two Slovene members of the presidency did not have a great deal of personal influence on matters relating to defense. Bebler asserts that although high-ranking JNA officers of Slovene origin afforded the Slovene political elite access to information on the inner workings of the military, Slovene politicians in the federal government had no real influence. But the Slovene military officers themselves were apparently suspect moreso than officers of other nationalities, until proven otherwise. According to secret staffing regulations of

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<sup>107</sup>Constitution of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Merrick, NY: Cross-Cultural Communications, 1976), 132.

the JNA, Slovene officers could be allocated about 20 of the 220 flag officer positions. Preferential treatment was given to officers who had become fully inculcated into the idea of South-Slavism, after many assignments in other republics, and to officers married to non-Slovenes.<sup>108</sup> But the Slovenes nevertheless did manage to make their mark.

Compared to the sheer preponderance of the number of officers from the other Yugoslav nationalities, Slovenes still played important roles in the evolution of the JNA, especially in the development of more sophisticated weaponry. Slovenes were especially prominent in the Yugoslav Air Force, traditionally the branch of service that required higher degrees of education and competency. Although Slovene officers sometimes filled the roles of highly influential positions, such as Chief of the General Staff of the JNA or head of military intelligence, never had a Slovene been appointed as defense minister or the head of the Security Service. The JNA officer corps, in accordance with federal statute, tried to be representative of the nationalities of Yugoslavia, but Slovenia was never able to fully get its share of the defense budget. This gap was one of the many indicators of the growing rift between Slovenia and the other republics. Arguably, the Slovenes had an historical mistrust of the JNA's intentions, and the JNA looked upon Slovenia with a wary eye. Historical developments bear this out, beginning with the Defense Law of 1969.

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<sup>108</sup>Danopoulos and Zirker, eds., 196.

Since the development of the doctrine of Total National Defense in 1969, Slovenia was profoundly affected in the area of civil-military relations. Not only did the doctrine create indigenous TD units which used Slovene as its language of command, it also promoted the active study of defense related issues. Of the five university-level programs created, one of them was placed at the University of Ljubljana. This program produced hundreds of defense-savvy civilians. Its graduates and scholars became the most prominent in Yugoslavia and well respected abroad. The program played an important role in the JNA-Slovenia conflict in 1991.

By the 1980s, the economic, political and attitudinal gap between Slovenia and its neighbors to the south was growing wider and becomingly unbridgeable. The per capita income of Slovenia was fully 60 percent higher than the rest of the country, with the exception of Croatia. The Slovenes, along with the Croats, railed against being the “cash cow” for the rest of the country. With the rise in Serb nationalism under Milošević, the leadership of Slovenia had little desire to offer economic support for his ambitions. According to Ambassador Warren Zimmerman, the Slovenes saw their republic as a Western democracy “in embryo,” and the issues they were disputing went to the very heart of Yugoslavia’s continued existence.<sup>109</sup> The JNA, as it was the most visible representative of the Belgrade government, increasingly became a focal point for Slovene ire.

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<sup>109</sup>Zimmerman, 28-9.



The anti-JNA sentiment grew quickly in Slovenia in the 1980s. Anton Bebler, a Slovene scholar of Yugoslav military politics, writes:

Particularly in the eyes of the Slovene public opinion, the JNA became the symbol of primitive Balkan “real-socialism” communist style, of intolerant atheism, militarism and Serb assimilationism, of the arrogant disregard for human rights and the for the Slovenians’ national feelings. Competitive political democracy, the rights of religious believers and conscientious objectors, the equality of Slovene language in the with Serbian in the federal military institutions in Slovenia, demands for performing military service in Slovenia, for reduced military spending – all these issues figured highly in heated public debates.<sup>110</sup>

In the 1980s two groups of political dissidents sprouted in Slovenia. The first was dubbed the Alternative movement, which was made up principally of single-issue groups promoting issues as diverse as Peace and Ecology, and feminist and gay rights. These groups were concentrated in the alternative youth scene of rock bands and artists. The members were tuned into not only the culture of the West, which they emulated, but also the prevailing political attitudes of the West. The major difficulty for the dissidents was adapting western political attitudes to one-party rule. Under the umbrella of the communist youth organization, the youthful members of these dissident groups used the newspaper *Mladina* and *Radio Student* to air their concerns within the confines of the one-party system.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Danopoulos and Zirker, eds., 198.

<sup>111</sup> *Mladina*, a weekly that still is widely circulated and popular in Slovenia today, was the main written voice for the student-age population of Slovenia. Aleksandr Pavković, The Fragmentation of Yugoslavia. (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), 106.

The other dissident group was the Society of Slovenes, a semi-official union which promoted Slovene culture and language. Through its efforts, the membership of the Society of Slovenes stymied mainly Serb interference into the cultural and literary affairs of Slovenia, and severely chastised Serb writers for their lack of support of the rights of Albanians in Kosovo. Two important developments came out of the shift in the political orientation of the Slovenes away from the central government: the criticism of the JNA in *Mladina* (and the beginning of effective exploitation of the media) and the development of political parties from the Alternative movement that would form the basis of the opposition in 1988.

Throughout this period, Slovene criticism of the JNA was allowed (or at least not suppressed) by the Slovene Communists. In fact, these political leaders used the growing dissident movement in their arguments for political and economic reform, including reduced federal spending on the JNA. This tolerant climate in Slovenia allowed it to become “the Yugoslav center of critical civilian opinion in defense matters and also the hotbed of biting pacifist propaganda.”<sup>112</sup> To be fair, there was growing criticism of the federal government Yugoslavia-wide. In Croatia, for example, Josip Jovic chronicled the democratic movements. He called these the first nationalist movements a healthy expression of the will of the working people against [federal] bureaucratic obstinacy.<sup>113</sup> Slovenia,

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<sup>112</sup> Danopoulos and Zirker, eds., 199

<sup>113</sup> Josip Jović, *Radjanje Hrvatske* (The Birth of Croatia) (Split: Matica Hrvatska, 1992) 38.

however, seems to have been more vocal in its critique of the federal government than other republics.

By 1988, there was a marked change in Yugoslav-Slovene relations in the defense sphere. In the first few months of 1988, *Mladina*'s editors had "their sights firmly trained on the Federal Secretary of Defense, Branko Mamula. In that year, the journalists at *Mladina* began to expose the JNA's covert arms sales to some of the poorest nations of the world, for example, to Ethiopia. They also detailed corruption within the JNA hierarchy, such as the illegal construction of a lavish villa for Defense Minister Mamula using federal funds. (Mamula retired in May 1988, several months ahead of his announced date, no doubt due to pressures resulting from *Mladina*'s revelations.) In March 1988, the Military Council, which acted as military counsel to the president, prepared a report on the "counterrevolution" in Slovenia. According to the Military Council, the movements in Slovenia were waging "war" against the achievements of socialism.<sup>114</sup> The Slovene Communist Party's central committee tried to refute the Council's findings. Rumors of a coup abounded echoing the military's doubts as to the resolve of the Slovene communists. Milan Kučan, the communist leader of Slovenia, himself later disclosed that a military intervention in Slovenia was discussed among the Council's members in the event local police were unable to control the situation. The Military Council, according to Kučan, was trying to establish itself as a "new center of political power" and at the time he decried the

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<sup>114</sup>Sabrina Ramet, 209.

Council's implied message of a widespread crackdown within Slovene intellectual circles.<sup>115</sup> *Mladina* reported on these activities. According to Aleksandar Pavković and others, just as the paper was beginning to publish secret Communist Party transcripts of meetings, three of *Mladina*'s reporters (all Slovenes) were arrested, as well as the Slovene sergeant major who absconded with the secret documents.\*<sup>116</sup> One of those arrested, Janez Janša, held a bachelor's degree in defense studies from the University of Ljubljana and was active in the Alternative movement. A seemingly unlikely coalition developed. It included members of the Slovene Communist Party, the party's media and the Catholic church, all of which strongly criticized the arrest of the "Ljubljana Four."

News of the arrest of the four reverberated throughout Slovenia. During the trial, tens of thousands of protestors filled the streets of Ljubljana. The four became instant national heroes. The trial became more than just a legal event, it became the touchstone for a revised Slovene nationalism, with the Slovene flag and nationalistic songs omnipresent. The use of Serbo-Croatian, the common language of the military, in the trial's proceedings, was the last straw. Milan Kučan said that, "Slovenes cannot regard as their own any state which does not secure the use of their mother tongue and its equality, and in which freedom,

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<sup>115</sup> Dmitri Rupel, "Slovenia's Shift from the Balkans to Central Europe," in Jill Benderly and Evan Kraft eds., *Independent Slovenia* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1994), 188.

\*The three *Mladina* employees were Janez Janša, David Tasić, and editor Franci Zavrl. The army non-commissioned officer was Ivan Borstner.

<sup>116</sup>Pavković op cit., 107.

sovereignty and equality of the Slovene people is not guaranteed.”<sup>117</sup> Gow states that the “anti-Slovene impression homogenized around the language question. It crystallized the image of the JNA as a Serb institution and that ‘they’ were a drain not only on Slovene prosperity, but also intent on gaining centralized control over Slovene affairs and depriving Slovenes of the ‘freedoms.’”<sup>118</sup> The subsequent finding of guilt and the sentencing to prison of all four was the catalyst to bring together the Slovene Communists and the dissidents. The arrest and sentencing of Slovene citizens by a “foreign” military was symbolic of the repression of Slovene sovereignty by the oppressive Yugoslav state felt by many members of the Slovene state. The JNA was completely discredited and the dissident movement grew into acceptance by more and more Slovenes. The Ljubljana Four gained near-martyr status.

Janez Janša, a prominent pacifist, continued to write after his arrest. He managed to produce the article “War and Peace in the New Constitution,” in which he argued that the JNA’s budget should be limited to two percent of the total Yugoslav federal budget. Furthermore, he argued:

In the new constitution, the question of equal status of the nations within the JNA should be regulated. In this very field the army lags behind most of all...the Constitutional changes should regulate anew:

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<sup>117</sup>The Yugoslav presidency rejected Kučan’s assertion that using Serbo-Croatian was unconstitutional. Ramet argues that the use of Serbo-Croatian in the trial of the “Ljubljana Four” led directly to Slovenia’s 1990 declaration that its legislation took priority over federal law.

<sup>118</sup> Gow, 85.

a) the question of the general plenipotentiaries of the arm; b) the question of equal status of the languages of the JNA; c) the question of the extra-territorial principle of serving in the armed forces; d) the question of the even distribution of senior officers regarding their nationality, in the JNA...Military courts should be abolished,...political parties within the army should be banned, the nomination of senior officers of higher rank on the territory of each republic or autonomous province should be in (the) competence of (the) republic.<sup>119</sup>

In 1988, taking advantage of the anti-Yugoslav sentiment generated by the JNA's actions brewing in his country, Kučan published an article arguing that Slovenia maintained its right to political secession from the Republic. The next follow-up, after the trial, was another article in *Mladina*, this one written by a Slovene lawyer, that urged secession from the federation and sought a Croat-Slovene confederation.<sup>120</sup> In December 1988, the federal defense ministry dissolved the Ljubljana Army District and transferred power to Zagreb, a move looked upon warily by many Slovenes. In September 1989, the Slovenes passed amendments to their constitution which took back from the federal government the right to manage its own national income and the right to command the military forces in Slovenia. Slovenia was no longer obliged to send the federal government its share of conscripts. The government also banned a pro-Serb rally in Ljubljana on December 1, 1989. The League of communists of Slovenia looked toward a free multi-party system of governance and a free-market

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<sup>119</sup>Sabrina Ramet op cit., 210-11.

<sup>120</sup>Sabrina Ramet op cit., 211.

economy, making it the most “progressive” republic politically and economically.<sup>121</sup>

The trial of the Ljubljana Four, more than any other event in recent Slovene history, galvanized the public against the regime in Belgrade and the Yugoslav National Army, its most obvious manifestation. The trial and its subsequent proliferation of pro-Slovene political parties were too much for the communist leadership in Belgrade and the JNA’s top officers. In this, argues Miloš Vasić, the army’s leadership viewed Milošević as a savior who would keep Yugoslavia together.<sup>122</sup> Being Serb, as a majority of the JNA’s top officers were, meant being pro-communist and also pro-Yugoslav. But the independence bug had bitten, and the Slovenes would press their case, much to the chagrin of the JNA leaders. All these events would culminate in 1990 with the coming Party Congress, in which the military and Slovenia would play integral parts.

After the Fourteenth Extraordinary Party Congress, the JNA continued outwardly to support the democratic reforms within Yugoslavia, but in the inner circles of the political elite, disapproval was mounting. Bebler notes several moves by the military that even local Communists interpreted as unallowable pressure on the voters. Among them were the visit by the defense minister to Croatia and Slovenia and the charges of slander brought up by a military

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<sup>121</sup>Danica Fink-Hafner and John R. Robbins, eds., Making a New Nation: The Formation of Slovenia (Aldershot, UK: Dartmouth Publishing Company Limited, 1997) 29.

<sup>122</sup>Dyker and Vejvoda, eds., 122.

prosecutor against the leader of the opposition party in Slovenia. Most importantly, the military command, in a move that harkens back two decades, subordinated the TD in Slovenia to the JNA command structure. Afterward, the TD forces were to be disarmed on the grounds that the army was protecting the armories from theft. These actions were stopped midcourse by Kućan, but the indignation of the Slovenes against the JNA increased significantly.<sup>123</sup> The snowball of Slovene resentment against the JNA was growing larger by the week. Open and free elections in Slovenia were just months away.

In April 1990, the first free elections in Slovenia took place. The United Democratic Opposition of Slovenia, or Demos coalition (pro-democracy) brought in about 55 percent of the vote. Lojze Peterle, the head of the strongest party in the coalition, made the appointments to cabinet positions. Among his appointees was Janez Janša, one of the “Ljubljana Four.” Janez Janša was to become, ironically enough, the defense minister. Later in the year Kućan was reelected, winning a healthy 59 percent of the electorate.<sup>124</sup>

About this same time, the Slovene government proposed that the JNA be fully depoliticized, claiming that as an organ of the state it should be subordinated to the desires of the federal political structure and not an active participant in this structure. This proposal was flatly rejected by the command as unconstitutional.

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<sup>123</sup>Seroka and Pavlovic, eds., 135.

<sup>124</sup>Janko Prunk, A Brief History of Slovenia: Historical Background of the Republic of Slovenia (Ljubljana: Založba Grad, 1996), 125.



Throughout 1990, the highest-ranking officers opposed the depoliticization of the JNA, supported by the Serb-dominated federal government.

In the spring of 1991, Slovenia proposed a confederation-style government to the rest of Yugoslavia. All the republics save Croatia rejected the proposal. As summer approached, it was becoming apparent that the rift between the Slovenes (and Croats) and the rest of the federation was spinning out of control. On June 25, 1991, Slovenia declared itself independent from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The sum of the previous overtures made by the JNA and the federal leadership toward Slovenia made it clear that this independence would not come without a price.

## **Defending Slovenia**

### **THE COMING STORM**

Doubtless the leadership of Slovenia hoped that leaving the federation would be peaceful. In fact, the leaders proposed that the JNA forces within Slovenia's borders be allowed to remain until December 1991, during which time the Slovene government would pay for all the costs associated with maintaining those troops. And there was some hope that this could be. The Slovene leaders seemed assured that the JNA would accept the republic's political decisions. In fact, Janša said on June 22 that the republic should not be afraid of military

intervention.<sup>125</sup> The Slovene leaders repeatedly asserted that disassociation from the federation did not mean immediate secession. Slovene and Croat intellectuals maintained that secession conflicted with international law (where disassociation did not), and thus invited civil war. Assuming civil war was in the interest of no one, the Slovenes would not actually secede and bring civil war down on themselves.<sup>126</sup> The best one could hope for and the idea promoted by Slovenia was that Slovenia's current borders would become international, human rights would be guaranteed and all international treaties signed by Yugoslavia would continue to be valid.<sup>127</sup> All seemed, at least on paper, to be a clear path to a smooth and peaceful move to a pluralistic Yugoslavia.

But the transition was not to be peaceful. Signs everywhere seemed to intimate that conflict was imminent. On June 25, *Slobodna Dalmacija* ("Free Dalmatia"), a Croatian newspaper wrote that the JNA's lack of response to the Slovene declaration "followed by a surprising silence from the military leadership" was the "calm before the storm."<sup>128</sup> Considering the predisposition of the military toward the maintenance of the federation and its opposition to democratic transition, Slovenes must have seen the military confrontation coming.

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<sup>125</sup>Milan Andrejević, "Hard times Ahead for Croatia and Slovenia," RFE/RL Report on Eastern Europe (July 26, 1991): 42.

<sup>126</sup>Milan Andrejevich, "The Croatian and Slovenian Declarations of Independence," RFE/RL Report on Eastern Europe (July 19, 1991): 37.

<sup>127</sup>Andrejević (July 26, 1991), 44.

<sup>128</sup>Andrejević (July 26, 1991), 45.

## THE BATTLE BETWEEN THE JNA AND SLOVENE FORCES

Some Slovenes did in fact anticipate federal military intervention. Since taking control over the Slovene Territorial Defense units in 1990, the Defense Ministry of Slovenia took control of the armories and even imported weapons as well. The reserve units could field more than 100,000 soldiers, albeit lightly-armed. The defense ministry gathered intelligence about the federal army's plans and its counterintelligence missions in Slovenia via JNA officers of Slovene origin,<sup>129</sup> effectively blocking the JNA's secret service from gaining intelligence about Slovene defenses. After hoisting Slovenia's flag over an independent nation and, perhaps more importantly, lowering the flags of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for the last time, President Kučan said, "Tonight dreams are permitted, tomorrow is another day."<sup>130</sup> "We still favor negotiation," Kučan told reporters, "but in order that real negotiations take place, we have opted for independence."<sup>131</sup> In response to this declaration, the federal Parliament in Belgrade did not recognize the secession and asked the army to intervene to prevent the defection of the two nations, but the Parliament had no authority to order the army to do so. The commander-in-chief slot had been left unfilled because the rotation of the Croat Stipe Mesić as President of the Presidency had been stopped. The Parliament decreed that the Yugoslav defense minister was

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<sup>129</sup> Pavković, 134.

<sup>130</sup> "Slovenia's Self-Defense," The Economist 320 (July 6, 1991): 46.

<sup>131</sup> Chuck Sudetic, "Two Yugoslav States Vote Independence to Press Demands," The New York Times, June 26, 1991, 1.

empowered to take necessary action to stop the Slovenes. When Slovene authorities erected so-called “soft border crossings” at eight locations on the Croat border, the JNA was prompted into action.<sup>132</sup>

The federal Defense Minister, Veljko Kadijević, had proposed the use of the JNA to keep the federation together, and for the last six months laid the groundwork for military action without it seeming a military coup. Relative restraint of the military forces would be the key to both Kadijević’s plan to keep the Slovenes in the federation, and paradoxically, to the success of the Slovenes against the federal army. Silber and Little argue that the JNA generals did not regard this as a war, but rather a “policing action” and provided resources as such. In fact, they even told the Slovene authorities of their plans.<sup>133</sup> This hubris would be the generals’ undoing.

On June 26, 1991, federal army units went on the offensive. President Kućan called a meeting of his ministers in his office at 5 a.m. Defense Minister Janša’s report was succinct. The 13th Corps of the JNA was on its way. The Slovene Territorial Defense forces had erected makeshift barricades but had not yet received orders to defend those posts. Federal tanks had left the army barracks near Ljubljana and were on their way to the airport. Janša recommended that the Slovenes resist these movements with arms.<sup>134</sup> The decision to actively

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<sup>132</sup>Sudetic, 1.

<sup>133</sup>Laura Silber and Allan Little, *The Death of Yugoslavia* (London: Penguin Books, 1995), 171.

<sup>134</sup>Silber and Little, 173.

resist the JNA was made in a matter of a few minutes. Perhaps the leaders had the fate of Kosovo in mind when the decision was made, or perhaps they had dreams of finally achieving total independence for their Alpine nation. Regardless, the Slovene leadership made a decision to resist the JNA. And the matter escalated into a war of independence.

Recognizing that their military units could do little to stop the JNA in a full frontal confrontation, the Slovenes adopted a strategy of cutting off the army's lifeline. While the tanks of the JNA rolled out of their barracks to assume control of the international checkpoints, huge roadblocks formed by hundreds of trucks, including many confiscated civilian goods transporters from throughout Europe, initially stymied them. The tanks' movements were not random or intended merely to set off a wave of fear among the Slovenes. They were part of the plan to blockade Slovene posts and to prevent general mobilization. The main goals of the JNA were:

1. To reach and take over the Slovene borders and airports by military force;
2. To cut off Slovenia and Croatia from the international community; and
3. To preserve the existing regime with Serb domination of the federation and the JNA.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>135</sup>Fink-Hafner and Robbins, eds., 46-7.

The JNA was able to take over 134 of 137 of its objectives immediately, including all international borders and the international airports in Maribor and Ljubljana. Yugoslav National Army officers thought the whole affair would be over in a matter of hours. They did not expect that the Slovene military units would try to wage a war against them, nor did they believe the Slovene Territorial Defense forces had the capability to defeat the federal army. In fact, the JNA mobilized only 3,000 (just 10 percent) of the troops it had in Slovenia.

In a move to impress upon the JNA the resolve of the local population, the Slovenes mobilized a much larger force. The indigenous force surrounded JNA barracks and cut off supplies of water and electricity. A general in charge of one of the barracks said:

I realized this was not a revolt or a political demonstration but that it was war. I think that was the moment when we cracked within. We realized that they wanted to kill us, to shoot us, that there was no Yugoslavia and that there was no more life together with them.<sup>136</sup>

In an interesting turn of history, the tactics applied against the JNA by the Slovene TD were many of the same that the doctrine of Total National Defense had promoted. The Slovenes were woefully short of heavy weaponry, but they had an ample supply of small arms and ammunition, including defensive weapons against armor. According to Christopher Bennett, the JNA misjudged the resolve of the Slovene forces, hoping instead that a show of force would be sufficient to

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<sup>136</sup>Silber and Little, 174.

send them back to their barracks. Instead, the Slovenes were willing to engage the JNA at every turn.<sup>137</sup> At the time of the defection, the JNA had at their disposal during the military operations against Slovenia the following:

*Table 3. Armament at disposal of the JNA and used in military intervention in Slovenia*

		At Disposal at Time of Defection	Used in Military Intervention Operation
1	Tanks	299	115
2	Armored personnel carriers	163	82
3	Field Guns	100	32
4	Howitzers	310	-
5	Mortars	228	-
6	Anti-aircraft guns	294	-
7	Combat, transport and reconnaissance helicopter	1-5	20 sorties
8	Combat aircraft	1-5	15 sorties

Source: Fink-Hafner, Danica and John R. Robbins. *Making a New Nation: The Formation of Slovenia*. (Hampshire, England: Dartmouth Publishing, 1997), 50.

*Table 4. Armament and ammunition at disposal of the Slovene TD and police forces for defense in military operation in Slovenia*

1	Armament and ammunition belonging to infantry(rifles, machine guns, submachine guns, pistols)	32,495 with 11 million rounds of ammunition
2	Minethrowers	1,024 with 2,397 mines
3	Anti-tank Armament	1106
4	Mortars (60 and 82 mm)	6,232 shells
5	Anti-aircraft guns (20mm)	39,900 pieces of ammunition
6	Anti-tank bombs	306
7	Anti-tank mines	1066
8	Explosives	33,379 kg

Source: Fink-Hafner, Danica and John R. Robbins. *Making a New Nation: The Formation of Slovenia*. (Hampshire, England: Dartmouth Publishing, 1997), 50.

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<sup>137</sup>Bennett, 158.

The military actions in Slovenia immediately attracted the attention of political leaders in Europe and the United States. In fact, within the first three days of fighting, a *troika* of representatives of the European Community brokered a cease-fire. But by June 30, 1991, the agreement was already in peril. The JNA issued the Slovenes twelve detailed demands, warning that it would take "decisive military action" if the demands were not met.<sup>138</sup> Among the most prominent of these demands was an unconditional cease-fire, giving up control of all border posts, the return of wounded troops, and resumption of supplies of power, water, and food to surrounded federal military installations. Janša rejected outright giving up the border posts. The Yugoslav Army units rejected Slovene demands that it abandon armored vehicles and tanks that were left behind in the barracks. Fighting again broke out.

There were several more days of sporadic conflict wherein JNA units claimed Slovene forces attacked them without provocation, and did not allow them to withdraw. The Slovenes claimed that the JNA used aircraft recklessly, for example strafing barricades at Vrhnika, Zejno, and Catez, wounding several citizens.<sup>139</sup> When the cease-fire by the European diplomats failed to last, the generals of the JNA issued another ultimatum on the weekend following Slovenia's proclamation of independence. When the ultimatum's deadline had

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<sup>138</sup>John Tagliabue, "Conflict in Yugoslavia, Yugoslavia's Army Issues and Ultimatum to Rebel Republic," The New York Times, June 30, 1991, 1.

<sup>139</sup>Tagliabue, June 30, 1991, 1.



passed, and the JNA sent its jets screaming over Ljubljana, there again was talk of an army out of control. Živko Pregl, a Slovene deputy prime minister who resigned from the federal government shortly after the JNA attacked, said that the civilians authorities had lost control over the generals.<sup>140</sup> Even the US State Department issued a statement critical of the “the intimidation and threats emanating from the highest command of the Yugoslav Army.”<sup>141</sup> There were further disturbing reminders as to who was actually running the military events in the breakaway republics. The Austrian foreign minister reported that Stipe Mesić (the head of the Yugoslav presidency<sup>142</sup>) assured him that “the civilian leadership had succeeded in opening a ‘fragile dialogue’ with the army command, which has appeared to be taking more decisions into its own hands the last few days.”<sup>143</sup> Even after days of combat, the fighting continued on, but on terms directed by the JNA’s military leaders.

On July 2, 1991, another cease-fire was agreed upon. But on July 4, the JNA had hundreds of tanks and armored vehicles en route to Slovenia and Croatia. These tanks were not intended to for use in Slovenia, because for all intents and purposes the battle there had ended. Milošević had already decided

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<sup>140</sup> John Tagliabue, “Conflict in Yugoslavia: An Army Besieged,” The New York Times, July 1, 1991, 6.

<sup>141</sup> Tagliabue, July 1, 1991.

<sup>142</sup> The blocking of the election of Mesić, a Croat lawyer and politician, to become president of the presidency - it was a Croat’s “turn” to become president - was one of the final straws leading to the secession of Slovenia. Milošević effectively blocked Mesić’s election because of the Croat’s commitment to revising the federation. Only after garnering EC support for Yugoslav unity did the election go through in the early morning hours of July 1.

<sup>143</sup> John Tagliabue, “Conflict in Yugoslavia; Yugoslav Tanks Mass Near Rebels,” The New York Times, July 4, 1991, 1.

that Slovenia could secede from the Yugoslav Federation; his party (the SPS) formally recognized Slovenia's right to leave. But the same right and recognition was not extended to Croatia. The JNA tanks massing in Croatia were then not a show of force against Slovenia, but rather against Croat secessionist ambitions to secession. On July 7, 1991, all sides agreed to accept the terms of the Brioni Accord, named after the island in the Adriatic and former retreat for Tito on which the treaty ending the conflict was signed.

The compromise stated:

Control of the border passages will be in the hands of the Slovene police, who will work in accordance with federal norms.

Customs will be collected by Slovene customs officials, but they will be put in a separate account controlled by federal and republican ministers of finance plus foreign controllers.

Air traffic control will be under federal control.

The organization of border security will gradually develop according to European norms (i.e. no army personnel on the borders).

The cease-fire will be accompanied by removal of the blockades around the barracks, the JNA will return to their barracks, all roads will be freed of barricades, the Territorial Defense will be deactivated, and the weapons returned to their original owners.

The prisoners will be released.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Rupel, 192-3.

For Kućan, this agreement amounted to tacit recognition of his country's independence. "This is far more than we expected," Kućan said. "It is the first step toward international recognition."<sup>145</sup> The war was effectively brought to an end. But in another chilling note on the future of the Yugoslav federation, Ante Marković, the Croat federal prime minister, was in the middle of a deal between Milošević and Kućan. The two agreed to Slovenia's secession in return for Slovenia's neutrality in the impending future conflict between Serbia and Croatia. Misha Glenny claims that as early as June 26, 1991, "Milošević had accepted the idea of Slovene independence."<sup>146</sup> Silber and Little argue that the agreement signed on Brioni was not a triumph of European diplomacy, but paradoxically a failure. The agreement had been worked out between the players themselves, namely Kućan and Milošević. United together, they destroyed federal Yugoslavia.<sup>147</sup>

But several issues were left unresolved by the Brioni Accord. In effect the EC had only been able to bring about a respite in the hostilities. The JNA still had thousands of troops in Slovenia, albeit back in their barracks. On July 18, the federal presidency agreed to a "temporary" withdrawal of the JNA from Slovenia, although all those involved knew that it would be anything but. With a sense of

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<sup>145</sup>John Tagliabue, "Slovenia Acts to Underline Independence Despite Pact," The New York Times, July 9, 1991, 8.

<sup>146</sup>Misha Glenny, The Fall of Yugoslavia: The Third Balkan War (New York: Penguin Books, 1996), 87.

<sup>147</sup>Silber and Little, 183.

self-preservation, Slovenia was concerned only with its own independence which would come at Croatia's expense. All JNA troops sent into the conflict were withdrawn within one day, with a complete JNA withdrawal taking place in the following months. Croatia was not so lucky. Its leadership knew of the ramifications of Slovene secession. Slovene peacemakers thought the Croats got what they deserved because of their inaction in the ten days of Slovenia's battle with the JNA.

Nevertheless, the conflict in Slovenia was over. Eight Slovenes and 39 JNA soldiers died, while 111 Slovenes and 163 federal soldiers were wounded. Over 2,500 JNA soldiers, mainly conscripts, were taken prisoner. Slovenia suffered relatively little damage, save for the border posts and the main airport in Ljubljana. Now that independence had been gained, the task of building the Slovene nation could begin. But a few aspects of the war are prominent and deserve further comment: the Slovenes effective exploitation of modern media and the lack of will amongst JNA troops.

The Slovenes were masters at manipulating the media, both at home and abroad, for their purposes. In fact, the media was a critical tool in hastening the desired goal of an independent Slovenia by bringing attention to the plight of the Slovenes not only to other Yugoslavs, but more importantly to Western European capitals. The Slovene forces did not successfully stop the JNA from reaching its targets in most cases, but the resistance they did display enabled them to run a

most successful media campaign. Pavkovic reports that the Slovene press center churned out reports of unsubstantiated body counts and accounts of fighting. The Slovene radio and television continually warned of aerial bombardments that never came. Dragan Orgulic illustrates the effectiveness of the Slovenes' efforts in the other republics. He points to events that took place in Croatia in the early days of the war when JNA officers claimed that the JNA's bombing of a television tower in Croatia was justified. The JNA was forced to bomb the tower because "what was in question was the terror on the people's psyche by the Slovene media."<sup>148</sup> On July 3, 1991, as

tension heightened, the Slovene Information Minister, Jelko Kacin, reported on Slovene television that his government had intercepted an order to all Yugoslav troops in Slovenia to prepare for battle on July 4.<sup>149</sup> The sight of blond-haired Slovene soldiers speaking in German or English to the cameras was in direct contrast to the JNA tanks shelling civilian residencies and crushing cars.<sup>150</sup> The JNA actions harkened back to the days of communist invasions of Hungary and Czechoslovakia, but this time for all the world to see. In the words of Silber and Little, the JNA lost the international public relations campaign.<sup>151</sup> Some blame the foreign press for not confirming the facts presented by the Slovenes.<sup>152</sup> Whether the "facts" were right or wrong mattered little, Slovenia had gained

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<sup>148</sup> Dragan Orgulić, *Svjedocanstva Hrvatskog Domovinskog Rata 91/92* [Witness to the Croatian Homeland War 91/92] (Rijeka, Croatia: Tiskara Rijeka, 1992), 14.

<sup>149</sup> Tagliabue, July 4, 1991.

<sup>150</sup> Pavkovic, 135.

<sup>151</sup> Silber and Little, 179.

<sup>152</sup> Alex N. Dragnić, *Yugoslavia's Disintegration and the Struggle for Truth* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1995), 182.

independence. But the effective use of media was not all in the Slovenes' favor. The JNA was its own worst enemy.

Among the most important weapons turned against the JNA was the lack of will to fight of its mainly teenage conscripts. "I don't want to attack the Slovene army," Cpl. Nebjosa Jankovic of the JNA said. "We don't want to touch them."<sup>153</sup> In another example, on July 2, the day after the election of Mesic to the presidency, a JNA armored unit in Croatia waited in a wooded area. When it moved out of its position and into Slovenia, Slovene forces attacked. Only after air strikes by the JNA did the Slovenes retreat, but a JNA non-commissioned officer lined up several junior-ranking soldiers and tore off their rank. These soldiers had refused to fight against the Slovenes.<sup>154</sup> The federal army's commanders were forced to face the unpleasant realization that many of their men and some officers were not all loyal. By the eighth day of fighting, many of them were reportedly disaffected or alienated by the fighting.<sup>155</sup> Parents of the conscripts from the other republics demonstrated against the federal government, demanding their sons' return. The will of the JNA to fight in Slovenia was just inadequate.

Slovenia enjoyed other advantages, which included a relatively ethnically homogenous population, motivated territorial defense units, and an apathetic, at

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<sup>153</sup>Chuck Sudetic, "Conflict in Yugoslavia; Yugoslav Troops Battle Slovenes, Ending Cease-Fire," The New York Times, July 3, 1991, 1.

<sup>154</sup>Silber and Little, 179.

<sup>155</sup>John Tagliabue, July 4, 1991, 1.

least with regards to Slovenia, leadership in Belgrade. Once the final shot had been fired and the last JNA troop had departed, the tasks to building a new state could begin. Slovenia could now move along with other nations in Central Europe in developing a democratic government and a free-market economy. One urgent task necessary for the building of an effective democracy was the subordination of the Slovene military to the civilian leadership. Given that many had witnessed first-hand what can happen without civilian domination of the military.

### **Civil-Military Relations in Newly-Democratic Regimes**

Political scientists have studied the role of the military in the newly democratic states of Eastern Europe as one of the factors determining the soundness of the democracies themselves. Indeed, as I have previously asserted, the field of civil-military relations is a convenient and useful method to explore the polity and the society on whole. This section, therefore, addresses the general guidelines in the contemporary studies of civil-military relations and provides criteria which I believe help to determine whether or not the relationship between the civilian of the governmental and the military elite is sound.

In so doing, I will explore several aspects of the health or malaise of the newly-independent Slovene Army in its relationship with the Slovene government. This includes the legal and institutional framework of the government and the place of the military in the government, the military's

prerogatives, and the civil society, political society and the state.<sup>156</sup> The first section of my paper demonstrated how an unhealthy civil-military relationship can have disastrous consequences. I place post-Yugoslav Slovenia as a model of a healthy, or at least sound, civil-military interaction. What are the essential processes and elements of good civil-military relations in a democratic society? The first step is to purge once firmly entrenched communist of civil-military relations with a new set of principles consistent with democratic ideals. Bebler asserts that these changes include,

- severing the link between the Communist Party and the armed forces;
- dissolving the main political departments and corresponding bodies;
- radically changing or eliminating the responsibilities of military political officers;
- disbanding Communist Party organizations, committees and cells in the military, and abolishing professional party workers in the armed forces;
- stopping party and party-related work as part of official activities by the military, paid for by the taxpayers;
- removing the military's corporate representation from Communist Party bodies;
- cutting the links between political (party) military officials, military security, military prosecutors and the military judiciary;

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<sup>156</sup>One of the basic frameworks for my discussion of the civil-military relations within Slovenia was developed by Alfred Stepan in Rethinking Military Politics, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.



revamping the systems of military education and the curricula of military schools and academies and dissolving military (party) political schools;  
abolishing the Communist Party's monopoly and other privileges within the military;  
allowing all legally existing political parties and associations to recruit members among the military on an equal footing (or prohibiting the professional military membership of any political party);  
prohibiting party membership altogether to some categories of military professionals (personnel and security officers, prosecutors, judges, etc.) in order to prevent party favoritism inside the military;  
discontinuing the use of universal military service for party recruitment purposes, and ending the indoctrination of military personnel based on party ideology;  
discontinuing and prohibiting all discrimination within the armed forces on political-ideological grounds (notably against the religious and non-Communists); correspondingly, changing the criteria for enrollment into military schools, and for employment and promotion in the military;  
establishing clear rules for the armed forces' disengagement as an institution from political competition for power;  
prohibiting special relations between the military and any political grouping;  
clear subordination of the military to effective parliamentary control;

redefining the understanding of military professionalism and allowing political activities for the professional military only as a private matter, in off-duty hours and off military premises;  
appointing civilian politicians to the posts of defense ministers in accordance with programs of political disengagement.<sup>157</sup>

Willem van Eekelen is of the opinion that at the very basic level there must be a constitution or basic law that clearly defines:

the relationship between the president, government, parliament, and the military;  
the checks and balances applying to this relationship, including the role of the judiciary;  
who commands the military;  
who promotes military personnel;  
who holds emergency powers in a crisis; and  
where the authority lies for the transition from peace to war.

“Second, there should be political oversight of the military by two means: democratic political control over the General Staff through the defense ministry, which itself is subject to parliamentary control, especially concerning the defense budget.

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<sup>157</sup> Anton Bebler, “The Evolution of Civil-Military Relations in Central and Eastern Europe.” NATO Review 4 (Aug 1994): 28-32. (Downloaded from the NATO home page on the Internet.)

“Third, the military should maintain adequate levels of training and equipment in order to safeguard the independence and territorial integrity of the state, but also to prevent demoralization and Bonapartism within the army.”<sup>158</sup> Another important consideration is the much less quantifiable “transparency” of the military to the society on whole. The theory is, of course, the more open and transparent the military and its workings, the more sound the democratic control. In an emerging democracy, and here Slovenia is included, Phillippe C. Schmitter maintains that in the broadest terms:

The armed forces must somehow be induced to divest themselves of any self-image they might have acquired as ultimate guardians of social order, as messianic agents for accomplishing national glory, and/or as exclusive definers of the national interest;

They must be given a credible and honorable role in defending the country and accomplishing (but not setting) national goals;

They must be neutralized against the enticements of civilian politicians who might turn to them for support when frustrated in the advancement of their own partisan interests by democratic means.<sup>159</sup>

Table 5 encapsulates the founding principles of civil-military relations by focusing on the prerogatives of the military.

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<sup>158</sup> Willem Van Eekelen, in Anton A. Bebler, Civil-Military Relations in Post-Communist States. (London: Praeger Press, 1997), 9.

<sup>159</sup> Phillippe C. Schmitter in the Foreword to Danopoulos and Zirker, eds., Civil-Military Relations in the Soviet and Yugoslav Successor States (Boulder, Co: Westview Press, Inc. 1996) xiv.

**Table 5. Military Prerogatives.**

	<b>Low</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>High</b>
1. Constitutionally sanctioned independent role of the military in political system.	None. Military actions to bolster internal security are only undertaken when ordered by the appropriate executive official within a framework established by a legal system and the legislature.		Constitution allocates primary responsibility for internal law and order to the military and implicitly gives military great decisional latitude in determining when and how to carry out their responsibilities.
2. Military relationship to the chief executive	Chief executive (president, prime minister, or constitutional monarch) is de jure and de facto commander-in-chief.		De facto control of the armed forces is in the hands of the uniformed active-duty service commanders.
3. Coordination of the defense sector	De jure and de facto, done by Cabinet-level official (normally a civilian appointed by chief executive) who controls a staff with extensive participation by professional civil servants or civilian political appointees.		De jure and de facto, done by service chiefs separately, with very weak or non-existent supervision by Joint general staff and with weak comprehensive planning by chief executive.
4. Active duty military participation in the cabinet	Normally none.	Active-duty commanders of each service also serve in Cabinet as ministers of their service.	Three active-duty military ministers plus a variety of other ministers, especially those with national security tasks (intelligence, National Security Council, etc.)
5. Role of the Legislature	Most major policy issues affecting military budgets, force structure, and new weapons initiatives are monitored by the legislature. Cabinet-level officials and chief aides routinely appear before legislative committees to defend and explain policy initiatives and to present legislation.		Legislation simply approves or disapproves executive's budget. No legislative tradition of detailed hearings on defense matters. Military seldom if ever provides legislature with detailed information about defense sector, and top officials of the defense sector seldom if ever appear at legislative committee meetings.
6. Role of senior career civil servants or civilian political appointees	Professional cadre of highly informed civil servants of policy-making civilian political appointees play a major role in assisting executive branch in designing and implementing defense and national security policy.		Active-duty military officials fill almost all top defense sector staff roles. Civilian participants normally do as employees of the three military services.

	<b>Low</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>High</b>
7. Role in intelligence	Peak intelligence agencies de jure and de facto controlled by civilian chains of command. Strong civilian review boards.		Peak intelligence agencies controlled by active-duty, general-level officers who combine intelligence gathering and operations functions. No independent review boards.
8. Role in police	Police under control of nonmilitary ministry or local officials. No active-duty military allowed to command a police unit.	Police under control of non-military ministry or local officials. Active-duty military officers allowed to serve in police.	Police under overall direct command of military and most local police chiefs are active-duty military.
9. Role in military promotions	Legislature has discussed and approved promotion law. Professional military promotion board makes recommendations to Cabinet-level officials who in turn make recommendations to the executive. Executive not typically constrained in selection of major policy-making posts.		Military has played a major role in setting the boundaries for promotion patterns. Executive very tightly constrained in who can be chosen from promotion list forwarded by each service.
10. Role in state enterprises	Only exceptionally does an active-duty military officer head a state enterprise	Military reserve officers routinely found in high positions in state enterprises, but normally no active-duty officers would head a state enterprise.	Occasionally by law and normally by tradition, active-duty military officers control key state enterprises.
11. Role in legal system	Military have almost no legal jurisdiction outside of narrowly defined internal offenses against military disciplines. In all areas outside this domain, civilians, and military are subject to civil laws and civil courts.		National-security laws and military-court system cover large areas of political and civil society. Domain where military can be tried in civil courts is very narrow.

Source: Stepan, Alfred. Rethinking Military Prerogatives (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988) 93

As evidenced by the volumes written in the area of civil-military relations, there is no set "formula" for analyzing these relations, each being truly unique. But, all things considered, a healthy civil-military relationship implies that the legitimate political leadership controls the military, and that the military's role in the polity is clearly defined and limited. The Slovene government has had seven years to refine its relationship with the military. This last section analyzes that relationship.

### **Slovenia and the Slovene Army**

The interpretation of the relationship between the polity and the military leadership is not so much constrained by concrete definitions, but rather by the power it exerts in individual cases. In other words, in a healthy democracy, the military continues to be subject to the desires of the legitimate, representative government. In regimes characterized by an uneven or unbalanced relationship, the military leadership can and often does exert undue pressure upon the governing process. This uneven relationship can have serious consequences for the society as a whole. In the case of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Yugoslav National Army took it upon itself to maintain the peace. In trying to save the federation, it hastened its demise. The peoples of the disparate republics were left to pick up the pieces and rebuild their countries from the ground up.

In Slovenia, I argue that the relationship today between the military and the civilian authority is in an appropriate balance for an emerging democracy. The military leadership is subverted to civilian leaders in all matters. To give the reader a better idea of the setting in which this discussion takes place, I very briefly discuss independent Slovenia, beginning with the basics, followed by an in-depth study of the relationship of the military to the polity and society. I place this discussion of Slovenia's geography, populace and other features here and not earlier in the paper because I want the reader to focus on Slovenia since independence. This short overview is important to give the unfamiliar readers a better understanding of Slovenia.

#### **BACKGROUND ON THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA**

Geography. Slovenia is located in southeastern Europe and was the northernmost province of the former republics of Yugoslavia. It is very mountainous, similar to the regions of Italy and Austria that border it, and is heavily forested in some areas. Slovenia's total area is 20,296 square kilometers, or about the size of New Jersey. Its land boundaries include 1045 kilometers, of which 262 km borders with Austria, 501 km with Croatia, 199 km with Italy, and 83 km with Hungary. Slovenia has 32 km of coastline along the Adriatic Sea. The climate is mainly Mediterranean along the coast, the European continental climate with mild/hot summers and cold winters in the rest of the country. The Slovene Alps reach 2,863 meters at their highest point at Rigič in the Julian Range (Juliske Alpe). The major rivers running through Slovenia and into

Croatia include the Drava and the Sava. About 10 percent of Slovenia's land is arable, 45 percent is forested, and the bulk of the remainder is meadowed.<sup>160</sup>

People. As of 1995, the population was estimated to be 2,051,522. The age structure is:

0-14 years: 19% (female 191,318; male 200,957)

15-64 years: 69% (female 701,082; male 708,482)

65+ years: 12% (female 160,662; male 89,021)

The population is growing at a rate of 0.24%, with 11.85 births for every 1,000 persons. Life expectancy is 74.73 years (males 70.91 years and females 78.76 years). The migration rate in 1995 was -0.19 /1000 persons.

Ethnic Divisions. Slovene 91%, Croat 3%, Serb 2%, Muslim 1%, Other3%.<sup>161</sup>

Religions practiced. Roman Catholic 96% (including 2% Uniate), Muslim 1%, other 3%.

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<sup>160</sup>The discussion of Slovenia's geography is condensed from Dr. Terry G. Jordan's the European Culture Area 3d Ed., New York: Harper Collins, 1996; ABC Country Book of Slovenia ([http://www.theodora.com/wfb/slovenia\\_geography.html](http://www.theodora.com/wfb/slovenia_geography.html)); and the "RI World Guide – Slovenia" (<http://www.redbooks.com.au/heinemann/hot/slovenia.html>). Ljubo Borban's Hrvatska Granice od 1918. do 1991. Godine [Croatian Borders from 1918 to 1991] (Zagreb: Školska Knjiga, 1992) 51-60, provides an interesting discussion of the borders from the Croat perspective. Present-day Slovenia's borders have not changed from the republican borders of the SFRY.

<sup>161</sup>Mainly Italian and Hungarian minorities.



Slovenia is both geographically and ethnically different than the rest of Yugoslavia. Its people consider themselves European, not Balkan, because of their country's geographical proximity to Italy and Austria, as well as the prominence of Roman Catholicism, considered by many to be a "Western" religion. Until 1918, Slovenia had been a part of the Habsburg Empire, a source of pride rather than scorn for many Slovenes. Other Balkan nations decried the meddling in their national affairs by Vienna, but such sentiment was rather muted in Slovenia. Slovenia's recent turn westward, therefore, should come as no surprise. But the road leading west has been riddled with hurdles. Among them is the consolidation of military power.

#### **BUILDING AN INDEPENDENT SLOVENIA**

The last soldier of the Yugoslav National Army left Slovene territory in November 1991. This absence was supposed to be temporary, a part of the "breathing space" agreed upon in the Brioni Accord. Upon the JNA's departure, the Slovene Territorial Defense units immediately assumed full control of the areas in and over Slovenia.<sup>162</sup> In keeping with the Slovene tradition of relative pacificity, the name "Territorial Defense" was kept for the new armed forces.

Slovenia established a parliamentary democratic system of government, with a president, a prime minister and a legislature. There is also an independent

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<sup>162</sup> Control of the airspace above Slovenia was difficult to accomplish because the JNA stripped Slovenia of all of its radar and air defense systems. The actual aerial threat, however, in the first years after independence was nominal.

judiciary. The president serves as the main representative of Slovenia abroad, while the prime minister makes the majority of executive decisions. A National Assembly (Parliament) is divided into two chambers. The lower chamber, the State Chamber, has 90 members elected to a four-year term. Eighty-eight members of the State Chamber are elected by proportional representation while the remaining two are elected by the ethnic minorities (Italian and Hungarian) in the areas they live in. The upper house, the State Council, has 40 members elected to a five-year term. The constitution laid the foundation of the Slovene government.

#### **THE LEGAL FOUNDATIONS**

The role of the military in the new Slovene government was also established in the Constitution of Slovenia adopted in December 1991. The various statutes relating to the military and its control are:

##### *Article 46 The Right of Conscientious Objection*

The right of conscientious objection shall be permitted in such circumstances as are determined by statute, to the extent that the rights and freedoms of others are not affected.

##### *Article 102 Functions of the President of the Republic*

The President of the Republic of Slovenia is its Head of State and the Commander-in-Chief of the Defense Forces of Slovenia.

#### *Article 92 War and State of Emergency*

(1) A state of emergency shall be proclaimed if the existence of the Statute is threatened by a great and general danger. The proclamation of a state of war or a state of emergency, and the introduction and repeal of measures necessitated by such proclamation, shall be effected by the National Assembly at the initiative of the Government.

(2) The National Assembly shall determine the deployment of the defense forces.

(3) In the event that the National Assembly is unable to convene, the matters referred to in paragraphs one and two of this Article may be effected by the President of the Republic. Any such action effected by the President of the Republic must be referred to the National Assembly for its ratification when the National Assembly next convenes.

#### *Article 123 Duty to Serve in the Defense Forces*

(1) Participation in the defense of the Statute shall be compulsory for each citizen within such limits and in such as shall be laid down by statute.

(2) Any citizen who, because of his religious, philosophical or humanitarian beliefs, is not willing to perform military duty, shall be given the opportunity of participating in the defense of the Statute in some other manner.

#### Article 124 *Defense of the State*

- (1) The manner in which the territorial inviolability and integrity of the State shall be defended, and the extent and organization of such defense, shall be regulated by statute enacted by a two-thirds majority of the National Assembly present.
- (2) The National Assembly shall be responsible for the supervision of national defense issues.
- (3) National security shall be predicated primarily in policies designed to promote peace and an ethic of peace and nonaggression.<sup>163</sup>

There are some important points to note about the Slovene constitution and the role of the military. The president serves in a non-executive capacity. The prime minister is the state's chief executive, but he conspicuously plays no role in directing the military's affairs. All power is then vested in the defense ministry, its action supposedly controlled by the prime minister through the defense minister, a cabinet-level position. The defense minister is responsible for directing all military activities through the General Staff, a group made up of the service's most senior officers. The chief of staff reports directly to the defense minister. The defense minister has always been a civilian. This lack of constitutional authority by the prime minister has created a defense ministry empowered to act unilaterally, subject to civilian political machination. (This will be fully explored in a subsequent section.) The National Assembly plays an

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<sup>163</sup>From the Internet - [http://www.uni-wuerzburg.de/law/si00009\\_html](http://www.uni-wuerzburg.de/law/si00009_html)

active role in the defense arena. It is responsible for the military budget. It can declare war and states of emergency and determines the deployment of forces. But the Slovene National Assembly has not played as strong a role as it could have in the founding years of Slovenia.

Under the JNA, the military enjoyed perks such as different education and justice systems, housing and health care. This created the separate, not always parallel, system wherein officers and NCOs worked outside of the normal, civilian channels. They also enjoyed a legal status out of the control of civilians. Under the new system, personnel in the Slovene military have the same legal status as civil servants. I do not believe that the military's access, however, to differing services is necessarily detrimental to civil-military relations *per se*. In fact, the United States military has its own justice system, health care, and housing. These services developed out of need because of the military's worldwide presence and unique mission. But in the case of Yugoslavia, these arrangements were part of a much larger cultural, social and political separation. Slovenia, therefore, wisely eliminated all services special to the military as an overt sign of the civilian control over the military. The military also has a more narrowly defined role, and a new force structure to deal with that role.

Since independence, the Slovene defense forces were the only armed forces responsible for the country's defense, although Slovenia did have an armed civil defense force as well as the traditional police forces. As Slovenia evolved

politically, so did it militarily. The territorial defense units and the reserve forces were combined and placed under the direction of the General Staff. Reflecting the change from a defensive military to a more classic military formation, the Slovene TD was renamed the Slovene Army (SA) on January 1, 1995, with the formal establishment of the Defense Law. The Defense Law is the first basic document that described the function and structure of the Slovene military. The Defense Law sought to establish the boundaries of the relationship of the military and the polity. From the beginning of an independent Slovenia, it was apparent that the constitution only provided the basic framework for civil-military relations. The original Law on Defense and Protection and the Law on Military Service (passed while Slovenia was still a republic of Yugoslavia) served as the legal foundation for the military during the transition period to independence. Because these laws proved inadequate for the long-term stability of the state, a new set of defense statutes was proposed and adopted over the following three years. The Defense Law, as adopted in 1994 and executed in 1995, regulates the military defense. Based on aspects of the Italian and Austrian models, it defines the role of the parliament, the government, and the defense ministry as well as of the military.

#### **THE STRUCTURE OF THE SLOVENE ARMY**

According to the Defense Law, the military would be organized into two corps: a land corps and an air force and air defense corps. By far, the infantry is the largest component of the SA, with seven brigades, including an alpine

brigade. The brigades are divided into regions supported by a regional command. They are located in Novo Mesto, Ilirska Bistrica, Ljubljana, Vipava, Maribor, and Celje with the mountain brigade in Bohinjska Bela. The main firepower of the Slovene military, however, is in the four armored mechanized battalions that are stationed in Vrhnika, Cerklje, Pivka and Maribor. The Slovene Army also has two artillery battalions, one in Postojna and Slovenska Bistrica.

The air corps consists of the 15th Airborne Brigade, the 9th Cobra Air Defense Missile Brigade and the 16th Battalion for Air Space Control. The airborne brigade has 11 helicopters and 14 fixed-wing aircraft.<sup>164</sup> The military also has a variety of support units, including communications, engineering and military police companies. For our study of civil-military relations, the transformation of the Slovene TD to a modern (if not yet “modernized”) army is important for its notable lack of involvement in enforcing civilian law. The police are organized by the local governments, and are under the control of the local officials. The borders are controlled by civilian agencies. No active-duty officer is allowed to command a police unit within Slovenia, nor are they allowed to serve in the police. As was the case of the JNA in Croatia in 1970 and in repeated actions in Kosovo, the military played an active role in ensuring that the government remained in power. Modern-day Slovenia appears to be very successful in eliminating the military’s role in any form of civilian law enforcement.

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<sup>164</sup> *Delo* (April 15, 1997) translation in FBIS *Daily Report* (Eastern Europe) 97-079.

The total number of Slovene troops is about one-half of the forces the JNA stationed within its borders. Based on the threat environment, in other words on the pragmatic assumption that Slovenia is under little threat of a direct military attack from neighboring nations as well as from the sea (remember Slovenia has only 32km of shoreline), the Slovene Army now has around 4,000 professional officers and NCOs and conscripts each year around 13,000 young Slovenes. As the effort to professionalize the military presses forward, the number of career soldiers is expected to rise to about 6,000-8,000. The increased number of professional soldiers is an important indicator of a sound civil-military relationship, but only insofar as the professional military members maintain their impartiality. There are around 50,000 reservists available, most of them are equipped with the Soviet-style weapons left behind when the JNA pulled out in 1991.<sup>165</sup> The number of reservists is expected to drop by over 10,000 in the coming years. According to the 1995 *CIA Fact Book*, the recruits are chosen from a pool of 512,925 Slovene men ages 15-49, of whom 419,456 are actually fit for military service. In 1995, 15,350 military-able men reached the age of 19, when they would be eligible for military recruitment. Reflecting the demilitarization of society after communism, the length of service for Slovene recruits, including the initial training and service combat units was 11-12 months, now shortened to 6-7 months, the shortest of any European nation. Because of military depoliticization, the conscript period is no longer used as a tool for political indoctrination and

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<sup>165</sup> Chris Hedges, "Slovenia Discards the Yoke that was Yugoslavia," The New York Times, May 31, 1997, 6.



party recruitment. At any given moment, there are approximately 10,000 soldiers in uniform in Slovenia.<sup>166</sup> The SA now reflects better the population it protects. It is a much more homogenous force although there appears to be no bias based on religion or nationality to entering the military. Women are allowed to join. But the quality of this mainly conscript force is in question. "Most of us just want to do our seven months in the army and go home," said one Slovene recruit.<sup>167</sup> But outside observers have praised Slovenia's efforts to modernize its army. German inspectors from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) reported favorably on Slovene soldiers. "I was personally very surprised by the motivation of SA members," Colonel Juergen J. von Block said. "And by the self-awareness of the recruits, who are very proud that they are Slovene soldiers."<sup>168</sup> Viewed strictly on the basis of personnel criteria, Slovenia is transforming its military into a professional force. But a major function of the quality of the military force is how the military trains its soldiers. The professionalism of the officers and noncommissioned officers is an important aspect of the military's view of how it sees its role in the government as well as how it is perceived by society as a whole. In general, the military should be professionals who are well trained and versed not only in military tactics, but the geopolitical environment in which they act.

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<sup>166</sup>Bebler, 1997, 201.

<sup>167</sup>Hedges, 6.

<sup>168</sup> *Slovenska Vojska* (August 16, 1996) translation in FBIS *Daily Report* (Eastern Europe) 96-207.

## MILITARY TRAINING

The Slovene Army had a difficult task when it sought to improve the professionalism of its military. One of the first tasks that the civilian leadership undertook was to remove many of the top-ranking JNA officers. According to the Blaz Zgaga, "although the Slovene officers and experts were among the most capable and educated in the Yugoslav Peoples Army," these high standards did not continue into the new Slovene forces, in part because of the "political ill-suitability of the high-ranking Slovene military experts trained in the Yugoslav Peoples Army."<sup>169</sup> The first Slovene Territorial Army was forced, however, to make concessions in forming the new officers corps of the SA. The original officer corps of the SA (then the territorial defense) was heterogeneous in that it consisted of former JNA officers educated in JNA academies, and officers trained in military academies and schools for reserve officers and officers chosen from university programs. The last group was selected from universities but lacked any form of military training and were quickly trained by the then existing military system. The military, once held in low esteem by the public in general and therefore not viewed as a viable career by many Slovenes, in the years following the military actions in 1991 enjoyed a steady rise in popularity. But the need for a systematic, professional training environment to match these heightened perceptions was obvious.

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<sup>169</sup> *Delo* (February 7, 1998) translation in FBIS *Daily Report* (Eastern Europe) 98-056,

The SA trains officers and NCOs at the Center of Military Schools in Sentvid, near Ljubljana. The center was officially founded on December 15, 1991, first training NCOs and then officers a few months later. As the SA advanced, the need for more education became ever more apparent, especially after the implementation of the new military doctrine in 1995. The military leadership realized that it did not have enough properly trained officers to implement the military structure. In 1997, changes in the officer education system were announced which pushed for more professionalism among the officer corps. Among the main provisions was demotion of officers with too little education, and promotion to appropriate levels of officers with advanced education.

The Center now has courses for NCOs (six months and a secondary school education is required), officers (twelve months with advanced education), officers entering a command, and a command-staff course (with seven months of military service).<sup>170</sup> Of interest is the fact that the military training center offers dozens of courses to suit the needs of the SA, and that the courses must first be approved by the defense ministry, not the General Staff. In the communist system, the preeminence of the party was paramount. One of the most important methods of developing this control was political education. The lack of direct control of the training curriculum by the General Staff is troublesome because of the potential political influence by the civilian defense ministry. But it appears that despite this

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<sup>170</sup> *Ljubljana Obramba* (June 1997) translation in FBIS *Daily Report* (Eastern Europe) 97-211.

lack of General Staff control of education curriculum, the Slovene military training system is developed for practicality, not political reliability.

The one-year officer training course is geared to training officers to serve in the army's nine branches. The goal is that in one year candidates will be able to acquire the knowledge to work with an infantry platoon and will be familiar with the work of a company commander.<sup>171</sup> The curriculum is divided into general military subjects and a professional military part for a total of 1,079 hours. In the general military studies, officer candidates learn the defense and security systems, military terminology, a foreign language, military and wartime law, military topography and geography, physical education and medical education. The second half of the training covers communications, combat operations, the tactics of the branches, weapons and equipment, and firing and exercises with mine-explosive equipment.

The Center of Military Schools also has devised staff schools to train battalion, brigade and corps staff members. In February 1998, the first members of the Higher Staff Course of the Command-Staff School graduated. They were the first of the battalion-level commanders matriculated under the new system, another move in the right direction toward professionalization of the military's officer corps.<sup>172</sup> This professionalization is a critical factor in ensuring proper

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<sup>171</sup> *Ljubljana Obramba*, 97-211.

<sup>172</sup> *Ljubljana Slovenska Vojska* (March 14, 1997) translation in FBIS *Daily Report* (Eastern Europe) 97-077.

civil-military relations as military members view their role as defenders of the state, not the governing party. The depoliticization of the SA, starting with its training, is an critical component.

The SA has followed the direction of Western nations by pledging loyalty to the state and its legitimately elected officials and not the ruling party. Military personnel are prohibited from active participation in political parties, creating a more politically neutral institution. No political party has a “special relationship” with military members. In fact, actions by all political parties in official military organization are prohibited; therefore military officers are no longer required to spend an inordinate amount of their time on non-military political activities. The right of Slovenes to object to military service was established by the constitution. The number of conscientious objectors has actually decreased in independent Slovenia. Young men no longer feel the need to resist the government and military service as they did under the communist system.<sup>173</sup> Despite the fact that the SA has become more representative of Slovene society at large, it still faces problems of making it a desirable career for many. Slovenia had traditionally been the most pacifist of the Yugoslav republics, if such sweeping generalizations can be made. This societal feature can be difficult to erase. Overall, though, the trend at depoliticization and professionalization of the military is consistent with a healthy civil-military relation.

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<sup>173</sup> Bebler, “Civil-Military Relations in Slovenia,” 205.

## **THE DEFENSE MINISTER AND THE MILITARY**

In a move analogous to many nations in the era of downsizing military forces, the military has been forced to adapt to the current threat environment and to change the military to best meet the threat. The military force structure emphasizes a much leaner force. This integration of forces, however, has become increasingly distorted and confused. Contrary to the structure of many militaries worldwide, and NATO countries, the General Staff is only one of four sections in the defense ministry. (The Defense Inspectorate, the Administration for Protection and Rescue, and the Inspectorate for Protection Against Natural and Other Disasters are the other denizens of the ministry.) The Logistics Administration, the Administration for Development, the medical service, the Center of Military Schools, the Information Science Service and the Intelligence-Security Service are all under the authority of the defense minister. What is the importance of all this?

According to the Defense Law, the Defense Minister is the person who issues all acts and regulations, but leaves the actual commanding of the troops to the General Staff. The main impact of this defense structure is that these other branches are not controlled by the General Staff, therefore they are not under the command and control of the military. Instead of direct supervision-subordination and communications, the defense ministry stands between these branches and the General Staff. Blaza Zgaga provides the example that reports from the Intelligence-Security Service on foreign intelligence services activities in

Slovenia are routed first to the Defense Minister, and then to the General Staff. Reports on the physical health of military personnel and logistical concerns are similarly distributed. The control of information directly impacts commanders and the decisions they make. The Law on Defense puts the civilian defense minister in a position that can subordinate the army to political ambitions.<sup>174</sup> In a healthy civil-military relationship, there is no participation of active-duty military personnel in the cabinet.<sup>175</sup> Slovenia has always had civilians filling the position role of defense minister, in direct opposition to the functioning of the Yugoslav polity wherein a military flag officer filled the position. The Defense Minister, however, has been a position that has repeatedly been used by civilians for political ambitions.

An example is Slovenia's first defense minister, Janez Janša. As stated above, he was the *Mladina* reporter arrested in 1989 for openly criticizing the JNA. Of the four persons tried and convicted for their roles in the affair, he became the most famous. When Slovenia declared its independence, President Kučan appointed Janša as the first defense minister despite having differing political agendas. In an effort to promote his personal ambitions, Janša used the defense ministry as a base, and the military suffered for his actions. Bebler claims that the relative heterogeneity among the ruling coalition have forced a sort of

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<sup>174</sup> *Ljubljana Obramba* (February 1997) translation in FBIS *Daily Report* (Eastern Europe) 97-067.

<sup>175</sup> In 1997, when the coalition government was seeking a new candidate for defense minister, the name of a former general popular in the Slovene battle against the JNA was proposed. His name was dropped because, although retired, the civilian leadership was worried that he might consider the needs of the military over effective civilian control. His nomination was withdrawn.

“pathology” on the military. The military has suffered because the holders of the highest political parties were of different political parties, engaged in personal competitions for power.<sup>176</sup> Janša was an egregious practitioner of this sort of political ploy.

Janša and President Kučan had a long-standing battle, beginning when Kučan led the League of Communists of Slovenia. Kučan received intelligence reports on the doings of potential rivals, among whom Janša was the most prominent. After independence, Janša loathed Kučan for his communist past. Paul Mojzes describes Janša as being representative of the younger generation of whose vying for power, “is propelled in large part by their claim that all who had been involved in communism should be kicked out.”<sup>177</sup> Kučan is in the camp of the reformist communists who, “by changing and adapting themselves to new circumstances, succeeded in holding on to power.”<sup>178</sup> During Slovenia’s ten-day war Janša’s direction of the Slovene forces could have been little more than an unwitting part in an elaborate game played by Milošević and Kučan. But it was precisely his actions in the war that raised his prominence, fueling Janša’s political ambitions. Given the almost total control over the military by the defense minister and the lack of constitutional authority, it was inevitable that the defense minister post would be abused. Janša made himself the *de facto* commander-in-chief, pressured the president into dismissing the army’s chief of

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<sup>176</sup>Danopoulos and Zirker eds., 206-7.

<sup>177</sup> Paul Mojzes, “Balkan Travels: the Case of Slovenia.” *Christian Century* 111 (March 9, 1994): 254.

<sup>178</sup> Mojzes, 254.



staff, made a number of appointments without proper authorization, did not pass on relevant military information to the president, and issued a number of unauthorized orders.<sup>179</sup>

Janša filled the ministry with his cronies, and promoted unqualified military officers to the highest positions. This led to the misuse of the small number of qualified officers, some being retired and others ignored because of the lack of political reliability to the defense minister. As one observer put it:

It happened then that after the fighting numerous Territorial Defense commanders who played a key role in the military struggle for independence -- although untrained for the military operations of the 20th Century and lacking appropriate subsequent training and necessary experience -- assumed important posts within the Slovene Army. This was to a great extent facilitated by the institute of the titular rank and even more by politicians' meddling in the Army. Defense Ministers Janez Janša and Jelko Kačín excelled in this regard, acting more like generals in civilians clothes than defense ministers.<sup>180</sup>

In the first two years of his tenure, there were reports of arms profiteering at the behest of Minister Janša by military units formed by him and under his control. All this came to a head with the arrest of a Slovene agent in April 1994 and the seizure of \$10 million worth of Slovene arms illegally bound for Iran. The Intelligence-Security Service (VOMO) headed the operation. Its chief,

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<sup>179</sup>Bebler, "Civil-Military Relations in Slovenia," 208.

<sup>180</sup>*Delo* (February 7, 1998) translation in FBIS *Daily Report* (Eastern Europe) 98-056.

Andrej Lousin, was a close friend and confidant of Janša.<sup>181</sup> This was not the only incident, but rather only one in an ongoing series of arms transactions that netted Janša millions of German marks for the sale of thousands of Kalishnikov rifles. The secret service (controlled by Kučan) allegedly discovered bags full of Deutschmarks in Janša's attic; the editor of the '7 D' weekly that first reported on this was charged by the Ministry of Defense for "besmirching the honor of the Republic of Slovenia."<sup>182</sup> In a case of political intrigue, Kučan apparently set up Janša to take the fall for the illegal sale of arms.

Janša also allegedly misused not only the VOMO, but the Defense Ministry's Reconnaissance and Intervention Service, MORIS. Janša tasked MORIS to gain information on his political allies. But the arrest of a suspected double agent and former MORIS operative in March 1994 gave the prime minister the justification to remove Janša from his office. The National Chamber approved the dismissal by a majority vote. The commanders of the MORIS brigade were relieved of duty, as well as numerous civilians within the defense ministry, including defense state secretaries and the minister's press secretary.<sup>183</sup> In no way did this diminish in the least Janša's popularity with the Slovene people. Even today he remains a prominent figure in Slovene politics.

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<sup>181</sup> Marko Milivojević, "Slovenia – An Arms Bazaar," Jane's Intelligence Review 6 (November 1, 1994): 496.

<sup>182</sup> Yugoslav Telegraph Service (in Serbo-Croatian) (June 29, 1993) translation in BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, July 2, 1993.

<sup>183</sup> Delo (April 5, 1994) translation in BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, April 13, 1994.

Janša was replaced by Jelko Kačin, described as being very loyal to Prime Minister Drnovsek. Kačin's first priorities were to reestablish control of the MORIS and VOMO units, replacing their chiefs with more apolitical appointees. But even Kačin was caught up in a series of political intrigues, eventually replaced by Tit Turnsek in 1997. Turnsek was replaced in February 1998. He was held responsible as the defense chief when two Slovene intelligence officers were detained inside Croatia with a van full of surveillance equipment. But the incident was only the trigger for his dismissal, not the true reason. Turnsek was a proponent of depoliticization of the ministries; he placed loyalty to the state over loyalty to his political party. Turnsek told President Kučan, "In this case, the interest of the state is primarily the professionalization and thus also the depoliticization of all Defense Ministry services and activities."<sup>184</sup> The minister's comments caused quite a stir in party circles, eventually causing the call for his resignation for not fully supporting his party's policies. In a statement made after his resignation, Turnsek added,

You see, my intention was to make it publicly known that there was conflict regarding the essential principles strongly emphasized by the Slovene People's Party, specifically depoliticization. This involves the attitude of a political party toward the state and toward the state-forming, repressive ministries. It was this relationship that was essential.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> *Ljubljana Mag* (February 25, 1998) translation in FBIS *Daily Report* (Eastern Europe) 98-073.

<sup>185</sup> *Radio Slovenija* broadcast (February 25, 1998) translation in FBIS *Daily Report* (Eastern Europe) 98-056.

In other words, despite almost seven years of independence the current structure of the defense ministry is still subject to the political influences of the minister. It appears that while he was defense minister, Turnsek pushed for more transparency of the military with less-susceptibility to outside influence as well as a leaner, more NATO-compatible structure. But in the end it remains that the defense ministry itself has little changed: the defense minister, and the Slovene Army, therefore, are in my opinion too strongly subject to outside political maneuverings.

One of the most disturbing elements of the Janša affair was the indication of lawlessness in Slovenia, an image shared by many Westerners as endemic to the Balkans. Indeed, the problem of lawlessness in the former republics of Yugoslavia is well published. Misha Glenny says, "Yugoslavia has the most porous borders in Europe thanks to a conspiracy of geography and corrupt neighbors."<sup>186</sup> To be fair, the situation in Slovenia is not nearly so grim as in the other republics. But Slovene military members have been caught up in the fray, causing not only the obvious problem of corruption, but problems with the army's image as a professional force. Much has changed since Janša's dismissal, but the potential for corruption remains. But Turnsek seemed to be a strong force in instilling discipline and rooting out corruption. He relieved a SA colonel and a major of duty for their role in embezzling funds. Turnsek related. "If someone violated rules, then he has suitably been punished or suspended...What is

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<sup>186</sup> Glenny, 103.

important is that a criminal act has been committed, especially considering that the issue involves a commander of the military police. One may not abuse one's position."<sup>187</sup> This attitude of intolerance to legal digressions is important to maintain, and I believe will remain strong. There are other aspects of civil-military relations that also must be considered, especially in the area of budgets and policy formulation.

### **THE MILITARY BUDGET**

The budgeting process is an integral part of the civilian control over the military, for it is one of the few truly effective methods by which the legislative branch can regulate the services. The Federal Assembly is responsible for reviewing budget proposals from the General Staff. Part of the budget process is a vigorous public debate over the not only the final amount of the budget, but the individual components of the budget. The Slovene process had been decried for a lack of "transparency." In 1994, Slovenia began to take action on the "Law on Fundamental Development Program" (*Temeljni razoni programi* -TRP) during Janša's tenure in the Defense Ministry to purchase the equipment the SA needed to modernize. It was obvious that the Slovene military needed not just an upgrade, but a major equipment overhaul. Until the beginning of 1996, Slovenia was under an international arms embargo which effectively limited the weapons it could purchase, but money was nevertheless put aside for the imminent purchases

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<sup>187</sup> *Delo* (September 4, 1997) translation in FBIS *Daily Report* (Eastern Europe) 97-251.

of equipment. Starting with the money allocated in 1994, however, according to Dr Anton Zabkar, former head of the Slovene Army Strategic Studies Center,

The Slovene state has not yet told its taxpayers how much money it has spent on arms and what we have received in return. In the majority of Western European countries as well as in the United States the legislatures decide on the money for arms purchases each year. The legislators decide whether they will purchase 20 or 10 aircraft, 40 or 20 tanks, and these figures are accessible to the public. But that is not the case in Slovenia.<sup>188</sup>

Slovenia earmarked more than 1 billion German Marks from the budget for the purchase of arms for the Slovene Army. Neither the public nor the parliament has any control over these funds. The Slovene public does not know what is being purchased nor what it costs...In previous arms purchases for the Slovene Army, one has been unable to detect a comprehensive approach guided by the final vision of the Slovene Army which would be presented to the public and the taxpayers.<sup>189</sup>

In other words, in the past the defense ministry has played too forceful or role, or the parliament has not used its power effectively. Illustrative of this is the purchase of a new weapons system, a major portion of any military's budget but especially critical to Slovenia's situation because of its need to start basically from the beginning. There seemed to be a change in thought with Defense Minister Turnsek. He sought a more open approach to the procurement process. "I want the Slovene Army to say what it needs," said Turnsek, "and the business and expert levels in the decision making process for purchasing weapons to be

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<sup>188</sup> Delo (December 29, 1997) translation in FBIS *Daily Report* (Eastern Europe) 98-004.

<sup>189</sup> Delo (February 7, 1998) FBIS-EEU-98-056.

totally separate from one another.”<sup>190</sup> According to the new system proposed by Turnsek, in the first phase of the military procurement process the Slovene General Staff provides the military requirements that a given weapons system must fulfill. In the second phase a business committee, independent of the military, will find and choose the weapons system that best meets the military’s criteria. But does Slovenia support the military’s spending initiatives, a critical component in the professionalization of the service?

In 1993, the defense expenditures (mainly for force sustenance) was 13.5 billion dollars (US) about 4.5 percent of the GDP. By 1996, defense expenditures had decreased to about 3.5 percent of the total gross domestic product.<sup>191</sup> Defense Minister Turnsek estimated that the defense budget in relation to the GDP will be between 2.11 and 2.2 percent, ensuring the purchase of much-needed new weapons systems. Under the old system of reporting defense expenditures, the annuities for weapons purchases, not the actual expenses, were reported in the budget. The government can expect a significant increase in the defense budget as the costs for these systems are actually paid.<sup>192</sup> The trend to a greater openness in military spending is an important one. Although militaries around the world, especially the huge budgets of the largest five armies, use a variety of accounting methods to disguise the composition of their budgets for “security” reasons

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<sup>190</sup>*Delo* (July 9, 1997) translation in FBIS *Daily Report* (Eastern Europe) 97-199.

<sup>191</sup>*CIA Handbook*, from Internet sources. There is an inconsistency in the CIA’s and SIPRI’s totals of defense dollars spent. I can only attribute this to different computational methods. This is a relatively minor issue in my report and does not detract from the issue of budgeting for Slovenia’s armed forces.

<sup>192</sup>*Delo* (July 9, 1997) translation in FBIS *Daily Report* (Eastern Europe) 97-199.

(perhaps rightly so) this is not necessary for Slovenia. Slovenia is currently spending \$600 million above its normal defense budget for NATO compatible equipment.<sup>193</sup> Slovenia is adequately funding its military, ensuring the current trend to a modern army. At the moment with a mainly defensive posture reliant upon regional security arrangements for the bulk of its defense, Slovene leaders must encourage continued vigorous review of the military's budget. The biggest obstacle, though, is not in the passing of budgets or in acquiring equipment, it is in the development of a cohesive policy. Slovenia's defense needs will then stem from this policy.

#### **SLOVENE FOREIGN POLICY AND THE MILITARY**

Since independence, the major foreign policy and security issues have been acceptance and integration into the European Union (EU) and NATO. Besides concern over the violence in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, probably the number one security issue was Italy's concerns over compensation to Italians who were forced to leave Slovenia after World War II. This Italian stance was a major stumbling block to its acceptance of Slovenia into the EU. Some in Ljubljana claim that Italy's real intention is territory at Slovenia's expense; however, Italy has only requested compensation for those displaced persons.<sup>194</sup> The blocking by Italy of Slovenia's entry into the EU had implications for the military, for it helped fracture even more the already tenuous coalition

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<sup>193</sup> US State Department Fact Sheet, "Slovenia's Record in Meeting NATO's Standards," June 30, 1997.

<sup>194</sup> Stan Markovitch, "An Unstable Government Faces an Election Year," Transition 2 (June 14, 1996): 54.



government and disrupted the development of a clear foreign policy. A coherent foreign policy is critical for helping the military focus its force structure. On a positive note, the Slovene Army was noticeably absent from the fray, allowing the various political actors to vent their views. Of note was former defense minister Janša who openly criticized the government's inability to change Italian foreign policy. In the last year, Italy and Slovenia have agreed on a method for repayment of these displaced persons. Italy now strongly backs Slovenia's entrance into NATO. Slovenia also has adopted closer military and economic ties with Hungary, but problems remain with Croatia. Austria is also a strong supporter of Slovenia's entrance into the EU; Slovenia enjoys a very amicable relationship with Austria, the largest foreign investor in Slovenia. It appears Slovenia may soon join the EU, but realizing Slovenia's other major policy goal, membership in NATO, has been more problematic.

Slovene membership in NATO was denied by the organization in 1997, due mainly to a lack of political support by the United States. But Slovenia's lack of a coherent defense policy and force structure have been problematic as well. Slovenia joined NATO's "Partnership for Peace" and sought stronger ties with the United States and West European nations. Beginning in March 1996, US firms were allowed to begin selling arms to Slovenia. A presidential finding decreed that, "furnishing of defense articles and defense services to the governments of Slovenia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia will strengthen the

security of the United States and promote world peace.”<sup>195</sup> But despite Slovenia not being asked to join NATO, an invitation in the second round (in the next couple of years) seems likely. Germany, Spain and others have publicly supported Slovenia’s entrance in the second expansion of the alliance. As mentioned above, Slovenia has tightened military ties with Italy, a NATO member, and Hungary, a first-round NATO invitee. Although Slovenia offers the alliance little militarily, with its 4,000 or so active-duty troops, it enjoys a very strategic location as a gateway to the Balkans (or to Western Europe!). Membership into NATO will definitely promote the general peace and security of Slovenia, as well as promote pluralization of politics and continued integration into Europe. Slovenia has participated in SFOR (the NATO-led “stabilization force”) missions in Bosnia-Herzegovina, has participated in OSCE monitoring, and has operated in Albania. Slovenia has worked hard for NATO membership and Slovenia’s Foreign Minister Dr. Boris Frlec has made it clear that it expects one day to join NATO.<sup>196</sup> NATO membership is important with regards to civil-military relations because of NATO’s requirements for political stability, economic potential and a strong civilian control of the military. I foresee

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<sup>195</sup> US State Department, “Presidential Declaration on USG Defense Articles: Slovenia, FYROM,” March 20, 1996.

<sup>196</sup> Speech to the EAPC Ministerial Meeting, Brussels on December 17, 1997, “Review of the EAPC Work.”

Slovenia someday entering the alliance, a fitting symbol of the progress Slovenia has made in achieving the soundest civil-military relationship in the Balkans.

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of my thesis was to analyze civil-military relations in Yugoslavia, both past and present. Through my own personal experience, I believe that the military had an active role – not just militarily – in the dissolution of Yugoslavia. I sought to show a pattern of military interaction in Yugoslav politics. The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was a state that was built upon the communist military victories of World War II. Espousing democratic ideals, the state was in reality autocratic and repressive. Communist Yugoslavia needed its great leader, Josip Broz Tito, to keep it together. And Tito needed the military. He founded the Yugoslav state with the military, and relied upon it to keep the federation together. The military and political leadership after the war enjoyed the bond of defeating the Fascists. Military leaders saw no need to be overly critical of the civilian politicians as the military were firmly entrenched among the elite of Yugoslav society. But as newer generations were born without this bond, the military began to take a different form. By the 1970s, the military was no longer just an organ of the state, it now became an active member of all Yugoslav political decisions. But the military leadership remained uncritical of the civilian leadership. By the 1980s, however, the military became a much more critical and active participant in the political process. As devolution and pluralization spread, the general's critiques became more severe until, by the 1991, the military leadership could no longer stand by. Recognizing that the Yugoslav federation was falling apart, and in turn their prominence, the army's

generals - firmly aligned with the Serbian leadership in Belgrade - took military action. I have shown that in trying to keep the federation together, the military instead forced the Yugoslav republics to resort to armed conflict to break away. In a ten-day battle against the JNA, Slovenia became the first Yugoslav republic to succeed in gaining independence.

In the independent Republic of Slovenia, the political leadership adopted democratic models, among them a depoliticized and professional military. Through constitutional provision and statute, the military's role in Slovene politics and society is clear. The military is firmly subordinated to and controlled by the democratically-elected government. A problem, however, is that neither the prime minister nor the president have direct control over the military. This power is vested in the civilian defense minister. This position has been abused for political ambitions since the beginning of the state, and the military has suffered. A legal provision must be instituted to make the president or the prime minister the *de jure* commander-in-chief. Once this is corrected, Slovenia will be a model of civil-military relations that all republics of the former Yugoslavia should follow.

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